

The Asian Question – Chapter 1

It is difficult to say which is worse, a desperate dictator or a committee running the most populous country in the world.

Kim Jong-il had it bad, after decades of economic mismanagement and resource misallocation, the North since the mid-1990s has relied heavily on international aid to feed its population while continuing to expend resources to maintain an army of about 1 million. North Korea's long-range missile development and research into nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and massive conventional armed forces are of major concern to the international community. In December 2002, following revelations it was pursuing a nuclear weapons program based on enriched uranium in violation of a 1994 agreement with the United States to freeze and ultimately dismantle its existing plutonium-based program, North Korea expelled monitors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In January 2003, it declared its withdrawal from the international Non-Proliferation Treaty. In mid-2003 Pyongyang announced it had completed the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel rods (to extract weapons-grade plutonium) and was developing a "nuclear deterrent."

In China, President Hu Jintao, and Vice President ZENG Qinghong Premier WEN Jiabao, Vice Premiers HUANG Ju, WU Yi, ZENG Peiyan, and HUI Liangyu needed oil. There was a matter of national honor and pride, the issue of Taiwan. Never mind that little dispute with India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region, Vietnam had discovered a large reserve of natural gas and the Vietnamese didn't have nuclear weapons. The US was embroiled in its internal politics over the war on terror and trying to cope with a flu outbreak, H5N1. Taiwan had announced that they would boycott the games that would start on August 8, 2008.

North Korea had stalled the 6 party talks until they had 10 atomic bombs, each on the order of 25kT. With the UN more concerned about Iran developing WMDs, probably because of Israel, the north had kept processing and stalling. Ten warheads had been fashioned and rested atop Nadong-1 missiles. By the end of 2002 North Korea was believed to have about 100 missiles with a range of 800 miles, enough to cover most of the Japanese archipelago. As of February 2005 Defense Intelligence Agency analysts believed that North Korea might already have produced as many as 12 to 15 nuclear weapons. This would imply that by the end of 2004 North Korea had produced somewhere between four and eight uranium bombs [on top of the seven or eight plutonium bombs already on hand]. One has to understand that when there is a limited supply of Plutonium and enriched Uranium, a madman is likely to go for more, rather than, bigger.

++++

In far off America, the politicians were engaged in selecting replacements for Bush, the House and 1/3 of the Senate. The rancor that had developed over the war in Iraq competed with the rancor 40 years earlier when the US had been in Vietnam. It had turned nasty and the American Congress began to reduce funding for the war, forcing the

President to not replace troops. Then with the outbreak of the avian flu, Congress had passed a Joint Resolution calling for Bush to bring the troops home to help deal with the epidemic. He caved in.

On Friday, August 1, 2008 the Republic of China declared independence from the People's Republic of China. Most people know that the PRC government has issued three triggers for an immediate war with Taiwan. These three conditions are: if events occur leading to the separation of Taiwan from China in any name, or if Taiwan is invaded and occupied by foreign countries, or if Taiwan refuses reunification negotiations indefinitely. Stunned by the audacity of the move, the PRC was outwardly slow to react and it wasn't until the night of August 8, 2008, coinciding with the opening of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, that the PRC attacked Taiwan.

In the intervening time, China had positioned its Navy and quietly moved to a High Alert status. The fleet of intercontinental missiles was checked and its lone type 092 missile (12 JL-1) capable submarine and its two type 094 missile (12 JL-2) capable submarines were moved to the east, off the American coast. The Chinese were unsure whether the United States would come to the aid of Taiwan; they were no longer obligated to under existing Treaties. On most calendars August precedes November and that meant the George W. Bush was still President and would be until the following January 20th. The Chinese underestimated the attitude of the lame duck President. He had a victory, Iraq, and a draw, Afghanistan. It appeared that no sooner had the US withdrawn that Iraq erupted into a Civil War.

Despite sanctions imposed by the UN, Iran was proceeding with its nuclear program. It had been suggested that with the assistance of the North Koreans, Iran had assembled 3 nuclear weapons. Iran's inventory of missiles included missiles from North Korea, capable of reaching Israel. Israel is small, 20,330km² of landmass, an area slightly smaller than New Jersey. It has a population of between 6-7 million. Arguably, it has the most powerful military in the Middle East and there is wide speculation that Israel has anywhere from 200-400 nuclear weapons, probably capable of being delivered by its Jericho 2 and Jericho 3 missiles and F-15 fighters, nobody who knows for sure is talking.

o

"Mr. President, satellite intelligence shows that the Chinese are moving their forces into position to attack Taiwan."

"What's available?"

"We can have 6 carrier strike groups in the area within 8 days. We can have the Kitty Hawk in the area within 36 hours. We have raised the Defense Condition from 5 to 4."

"Notify the Russia Ambassador that we're moving to DEFCON 3 because of the situation in the Taiwan Strait and then do it. You'd better get all of the Boomers out of port, Bob."

“Mr. President, we have Ohio, Michigan and Georgia ready to put to sea with SEAL teams. We can sail the West Coast SSBNs within 24 hours. We have been replenishing everyone since August 2nd, just in case. We almost have that completed.”

“Put the 82nd on alert status and transport them to Ft. Irwin. I want them ready to move to Taiwan in 30 hours.”

“We’re handicapped because of the Olympic Games.”

“Pull our athletes out in protest of the PRC’s invasion of Taiwan. I’ll have Condie speak to the UK. We better have Chertoff suggest on TV that everyone stock up on a 2 week supply of food and water and blame it on the epidemic.”

“What about the French?”

“Notify NATO that we’re going to DEFCON 3, they’ll get the word.”

o

For sake of timelines, all times will be stated in Zulu, GMT. Beijing and Taipei are GMT +8 while the East Coast of the US is GMT -5 and the West Coast is GMT-8. London is GMT, Paris is GMT +1, Israel is GMT +2, Moscow is GMT +3 and Tokyo is GMT +9. At 0800 Zulu on 8Aug08, the missile forces stationed across the strait from Taiwan began a barrage using conventional warheads. The Chinese had more than 1,000 missiles deployed and reloads standing by. It was midnight in London, 7pm in Washington and 4pm on the West Coast. Chinese amphibious forces raced inland on Taiwan as soon as the missile barrage stopped. A substantial portion of the Taiwanese Air Force had been destroyed in the barrage; the intended targets were military installations.

“Mr. President, you have a call. President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan is on the line.”

“Mr. President, George Bush, what can I do for you?”

“I know; we’ve got a satellite stationed over your country. We have the 82nd Airborne being transitioned to Ft. Irwin and all of our West Coast fleet will be at sea within 13 hours. Your adversary has their entire Navy headed your way; it appears that they intend to invade.”

“Not until our people are out of Beijing. I ordered our Olympic Team withdrawn in protest of the attack. The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is at sea, headed your way.”

“Three Long Angeles I-class subs, Mr. President. We don’t want to start World War Three if we can avoid it. When the Strike Group gets within combat range we’ll do what we can to prevent PRC fighter’s from attacking Taipei.”

“The Prime Minister said that Britain couldn’t pull its contingent from Beijing, Mr. President.”

“Did he say why, Condie?”

“He said that the United Kingdom wasn’t getting involved in another American war.”

“I think that I’m going to really miss Tony Blair. I want you to file a protest with the United Nations. See whom you can get aboard with the US in the protest. Ask them to convene the Security Council.”

“What are we doing, Mr. President?”

“I’ve sorted the missiles boats, the Carrier Strike Groups and have the 82nd moving to Ft. Irwin for staging. We’re at DEFCON 3 and I advised the President of Taiwan that the Kitty Hawk Strike Group would try to keep their airspace clear. I’ll not be the first leader to employ nuclear weapons. We’ll have 2 Strike Groups there when the Kitty Hawk arrives.”

“The Russian Ambassador advised me that President Putin told Beijing not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances. He told them that Russia would remain relatively neutral so long as they didn’t. What other Strike Group is in the region?”

“The Reagan.”

“The Kitty Hawk was supposed to retire this year.”

“The Bush just entered the Pacific Ocean and is under orders to supplement the forces off Taiwan. The Kitty Hawk won’t be recalled until this mess is cleared up.”

o

Sometime later in Colorado Springs, CO...

“I have a launch.”

“How many, from where and what is their projected destination?”

“Sir, 10 missiles launched from North Korea and they’ve targeted Japan.”

“Anything from China?”

“Negative.”

“Mr. President, we have 10 missiles out of North Korea headed to Japan.”

“Notify the Japanese. Move us up to DEFCON 2.”

“Sir, the Japanese probably know by now and the missiles are nearly there.”

“Do it anyway and move on the DEFCON.”

“Mr. President, George Bush. Sorry to wake you, but North Korea just launched 10 missiles against Japan. You did? I didn’t realize you had satellites over the area. We’ve ordered our athletes out of Beijing and have all of our West Coast assets moving to support Taiwan. Perhaps you could speak to Beijing again about not going nuclear?”

“Are you sure? When did the Changzheng 6 sail? That type 092 carries 12 Ju Lang-1 (Ju Lang = Giant Wave, NATO code-name: CSS-N-3) or modified JL-1A SLBMs and they each have a single 250kT nuclear warhead don’t they? The type 094s too? I thought they wouldn’t be ready before 2010. Oh, I wanted you to know that the United States is at DEFCON 2 in response to the attack on Japan. My regards to Mrs. Putin.”

“Shucks.”

“What’s wrong?”

“The Changzheng 6 and those two type 094s sailed 10 days ago. What’s our estimate of the Chinese nuclear forces?”

“We estimate that they have deployed up to 36 of the DF-31A with 3 MIRV’d warheads in the 350kT range. They have an equal number of DF-5As deployed with a greater range, 13,000km and a single 3mT warhead. The DF-31As have an estimated range of 12,000km. Beijing is only 11,000km from Washington, Mr. President.”

“So you’re telling me they can launch 36 3mT warheads, 108 350kT warheads and 12 250kT warheads against us?”

“You’ve been briefed before.”

“I didn’t think it would ever come to this. I want 4 of the Ohio-class SSBNs to launch everything they have on the People’s Republic if they launch on us.”

“Isn’t that a bit of overkill? That would constitute 768 warheads in the 350kT range.”

“154 missiles against this country isn’t overkill? Get choppers up and have them pre-flight the 747s.”

“Where are you going?”

“New Mexico.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 2

“Get my cabinet assembled and aboard AF-1. I want to depart in one hour or less. Bring their families too, but no media.”

“Shouldn’t you warn the nation that we’re on the brink of a nuclear war? Shouldn’t we respond to the North Korean attack on Japan?”

“In time, yes. We already have the Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Group clear and Japan doesn’t have any nuclear weapons. Send them \$200,000.00 and our apologies. If we warn the public before the missiles fly, it could lead to tragic consequences. If people are in their homes, most of them at least have a basement. If we make an announcement, they’ll end up in a traffic jam on the road and die for sure, if it happens.”

“It’s going to take us 3 hours to fly to New Mexico, Mr. President. Wouldn’t you be better going to Weather Mountain?”

“That’s where everyone expects me to go. I’d guess if the PRC attacks the US, they’d target NORAD and Weather Mountain. I don’t care which one of the shelters we go to, but I won’t go either of those places and I’d prefer Holloman.”

“You’re the boss.”

++++

The first we heard of the problem brewing in Southeast Asia was the announcement on CNN that the President had ordered the US Olympic Team to withdraw from the 2008 Games. I put it on channel 42, Fox News, to listen to John Gibson. Gibson was talking about Air Force One having left Washington full of government officials earlier in the day. It was about 2:15pm, 2015 Zulu when I went to the living room.

“Sue, have you been watching the news?”

“I’ve been watching Lifetime, what were you watching?”

“Fox news. John Gibson said that the 747s left Washington earlier in the day with ‘several top officials’ aboard.”

“Headed where?”

“He didn’t know. He said that they wouldn’t let any media aboard. Then, about 15 minutes later the second 747 left too with the Vice President and the other half of the cabinet aboard.”

“Sounds like rats deserting a sinking ship.”

“ABC had a short piece on the 82nd Airborne restaging. They called it a training exercise.”

“Restaging where?”

“Ft. Irwin National Training Center.”

“It’s probably nothing. Want to go to the store with me?”

“Grocery shopping?”

“It’s time to stock up again; we’re getting low on several things. If figured we hit Sam’s Club. Come on Barry, I need help carrying everything.”

o

I figured that the flu must have invaded Washington and the Executive Branch decided they had to get out of town. Probably headed to NORAD in Colorado Springs. Sue liked when I helped with the every-other-month trip to the grocery store. Back around Y2K, we’d moved out of California and relocated in New Mexico. I liked that and within a year had more than made up for those stupid gun laws California had enacted. Sue was into making quilts and had a couple of fancy sewing machines.

We’d bought an old farmhouse about double the size of our home in LA and it had out buildings. I’d been puttering, I’m retired you know, and all of the buildings were in pretty good shape, a nail here, a new board there and a coat of paint when I had it done. After the first power outage, Sue insisted that I put in a standby generator. We put in a Cummins HDCAB 12.5kw diesel powered RV unit with a separate automatic transfer switch. The salesman said the 1,800-rpm engine was good for years. I liked it because at full power, it only burned 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ gallon per hour. Sue insisted I put in a 1,000-gallon farm tank so we had fuel for the generator and our 2005 Dodge 3500.

We found living in rural New Mexico to be far different from LA, fewer sirens for one thing. We’d done well on our home and had bought the old acreage at a tax sale. Paid all the back taxes and it was ours. I had my reservations but it was obvious the roof didn’t leak so we’d gone ahead and bought it. That was just the farmstead; the guy who owned the land had sold off the ranchland before he’d died. I noticed right off that the air was a little thin so I hadn’t pushed. It took me until 2005 to have everything repaired and repainted.

Sue liked to garden and there was a large garden plot on the land. I got a fella to plow and disk it and I raked it down. The farmhouse had a wood stove and furnace and I’m not a lumberjack. I didn’t even like splitting the firewood down to kindling for the stove. I did it, but I mostly cussed the entire time. We’d ordered wood by the large truckload, usually 5 cords at a time, about \$750 worth. That was dumped, not stacked. I moved the wood to the basement via the coal chute. I suppose I’d have been better off to just

buy coal, but that would have meant having wood for the kitchen stove and coal for the furnace.

o

“You wouldn’t have thought there be this many people at the store on a weekday, what’s going on?”

“I talked to a lady who said that the Chinese had attacked Taiwan and that the President had ordered our athletes out of Beijing.”

“Funny, Gibson didn’t say anything about that. I also heard that North Korea had attacked Japan, I wonder what’s up with that.”

“I think maybe I buy a little extra, just in case.”

“Just in case what, Sue?”

“Just in case the US goes to war with China and North Korea.”

“You don’t think... do you?”

“I don’t know Barry, better safe than sorry.”

She got me to thinking and I started a mental list: the fuel tank was full, but I’d better order another 5 cords of wood to be delivered today; I had enough ammo to fight quite a battle so I was good there; I’d better stop by the Dodge dealer and pick up spare parts for the RAM; and, I’d better top off the pickup’s fuel tanks too. Sue had a second cart and it was filled with toilet paper. By the time we finished at Sam’s Club, we were each pulling one cart and pushing a second. I mentioned the Dodge dealer and Sue pointed to an auto parts store. I picked up a few cases of oil, half a case of oil filters, a couple of spare air filters, fuel filters, belts, PRI products for the fuel tank, glow plugs and so forth. We stopped by the Chevron station and topped off the dual tanks. Sue called the guy who sold us firewood on the cell phone and he said he could bring a load during the afternoon.

Where in New Mexico? Between the White Sands Missile Range and the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation, north of Tularosa on US 54. I suppose we were about due north of Holloman AFB. There were mountains in the area and the elevation was pushing a mile. That’s mostly why I putted around, didn’t want to get short of air and have a heart attack. The garden kept us in vegetables and potatoes. Sue had a bread and butter pickle recipe I really liked. I built shelves in the basement to store our food, we’d put up 105 quarts of green beans, 1,000-pounds of spuds, onions, canned corn, beets, carrots and made 49 quarts of pickles. We had a 25ft³ chest freezer that we filled with Black Angus beef and extra meat from Sam’s Club. We could go a long time on the food we had, providing I could keep the freezer cold.

“I brought the wood, where do you want it dumped?”

“Over there by the coal chute.”

“Mind telling me why you don’t use coal?”

“Wood stove, wood furnace and fireplace. It never made much sense to buy two kinds of fuel.”

“Fuel is going to be hard to come by in the future; you’ve heard the news, right?”

“Sue told me that the US was getting into it with China.”

“I saw Air Force One fly over Alamogordo; I guess we know where Washington bugged out to.”

“How could you tell?”

“Mister, there aren’t many airplanes painted like Air Force One. Anyway, I can deliver a truckload of coal and it will give you 12 times as much heat as that truckload of wood.”

“When could you bring it?”

“Tomorrow morning. If you have a coal room, you ought to empty it out and I can dump the coal right into that room.”

“You’d better dump that load of wood over there then, you’ll need access to the coal chute.”

“I’ll be here around 8am. Do you need help moving the wood?”

“There are 5 cords down there. It usually takes me a week.”

“I’ll send my two teenage boys out and they’ll move it in a couple of hours for \$60.”

“I can handle that, thanks.”

“That will be \$750 for the wood, you can pay the boys directly, in cash.”

“What was that all about?”

“He’s sending his two boys out to empty the coal room and bringing a load of coal in the morning. That gives us 10 cords of wood and a truckload of coal. They can stack the wood in that empty corner in the basement. He said that he saw Air Force One coming into Holloman.”

“Are we going to have a war, Barry?”

“I can’t tell you that Sue, but I don’t like them moving the government to New Mexico.”

“I’m going to call Chevron and see if they can put in a second diesel tank.”

“Are you sure?”

“Even if we only run the generator at minimum levels, we won’t have enough fuel for more than a couple of months, Barry. We’ll have to shut down everything except the freezer and the refrigerators and use our oil lamps. Sometimes you don’t think ahead.”

“Fine, do it. I ordered the coal; I resent you saying that I don’t think ahead.”

“Did you get the Geiger counters and KIO_3 ? You bought nice guns, but you didn’t get ammo until I got a hold of Ammoman and ordered it and extra magazines. Who went surfing on the Internet and found a trauma kit?”

Sue was a little strong willed and I’d learned years before not to argue over her preparedness thing. And if Sue didn’t know what I wanted for weapons, she’d tell me. She knew exactly what I wanted when it came to guns, 2 Springfield Armory Loaded M1As and a pair of their mil spec M1911s. She also bought 2 M-6 folding rifles, used, from a gun store. SA discontinued making the M-6 rifles some time ago. Don’t get me wrong; I’m not one of those liberals who are opposed to guns. I wanted to buy an assault rifle as soon as we moved to New Mexico and I had in mind a DSA FAL. Sue insisted that the M1A would be more politically correct when the Democrats won in 2008. What the heck, they shot the same ammo. But, I’m wondering if we have a war with the Chinese, will we still have an election?

The boys came by and moved the wood in about 2½ hours. I gave them \$35 apiece and they said that their dad already had the coal on the truck when they left. If I wanted, he could deliver it tonight. I told them that was fine with me and if he didn’t, I’d see him in the morning. They told me it was \$50 a ton and the truck held 5 tons of coal. It wasn’t an hour before he was there with the truckload of coal. He had a good day; he sold me \$750 worth of wood and \$250 worth of coal. Sue said that Chevron would bring by a tank at 8am tomorrow and fill it immediately.

“How big of a tank?”

“All they had on hand was a used 2,000-gallon tank. He told me we could have a new 1,000-gallon tank, but he’d have to order it.”

“That will take a gallon of PRI-D, Sue. I guess it’s a good thing I bought 12 of the 32 ounce bottles, I used 2 so far and will need 4 more for the new tank.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 3

“Did you get PRI-Ocide?”

“Yep, a dozen 16 ounce bottles.”

“I want you to treat the diesel with PRI-D and PRI-Ocide.”

“You realize that if we don’t have a power outage, we have enough diesel fuel for several years of driving, don’t you? We get about 15mpg and 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel will run the truck for 45,000 miles.”

“Well, 3,000-gallons of diesel fuel will run the generator at 50% power for almost 7,000-hours, Barry. We can probably get a year out of the fuel if all we run are the refrigerators, freezer and furnace fan. Did you get some of those little bottles of PRI-D for your fuel tank?”

“Yes dear.”

“You’d better add some PRI-Flow to the tanks too, it gets very cold in the winter.”

“Yes dear.”

I went to the basement and got a beer, I can only take so much of her planning my day. The PRI-Flow would keep diesel fuel from gelling down to -50° , provided you mixed it with the fuel at the same rate as PRI-D, 1:2,000. I’d bought a case each of the PRI products; I was beginning to believe that she owned stock in the company. I took a pull on my Bud and reflected on how having 2 tanks was better, we could completely empty one and that would make adding my wife’s products much easier. Are you sure Simon Lagree wasn’t a woman?

++++

Sue wrote the Chevron guy a check to pay for the tank and 2,000-gallons of #2. My only part in the whole charade was pouring in 1 gallon of PRI-D, 1 gallon of PRI-Flow and $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of PRI-Ocide. I went in and turned on the TV. The troops had been moved from Ft. Irwin to Hawaii where the planes were refueled and then headed to Australia. They were discussing the fleet all being at sea on the West Coast. I must have missed that before. Apparently, the US had 2 Carrier Strike Groups, the Kitty Hawk and the Reagan on scene off the East Coast of Taiwan. The George H. W. Bush CSG was making standard speed having rounded the horn a few days ago. The other Carrier Strike Groups had sailed 4 days before and were well over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the way to Taiwan. I figured that they must have been pouring on the coals.

“What are you watching?”

“The news. Did you know we sent our entire West Coast Fleet to Taiwan?”

“I heard someone mention that at Sam’s Club.”

“Is that why we’ve been storing wood, coal, fuel and food?”

“Barry, it’s never been a question of if. It’s always been a question of when. You should have seen the preparations my father made; he was almost psychotic on the subject.”

“I’m not opposed to being prepared, you know.”

“I know, but you were born and raised in California and don’t appreciate the fact that when the stuff hits the fan, the government won’t be there to bail us out.”

“I’m not a pacifist or a liberal. I did my time in the Army.”

“During peacetime, you did. But that puts you a step up on a lot of people. Once the bullets start flying, you’ll know what to do.”

“Yeah, duck. I was in after Vietnam. Those were the days when the military was downsizing. It’s been a long time since I’ve had on ALICE gear.”

“Speaking of which, we should go to Alamogordo and pick up a couple of sets and some magazine pouches.”

“We can probably find BDUs and Fritz helmets, too.”

“Yeah, right. I don’t think we need military clothes, but those PASGT helmets might not be a bad idea. What about body armor?”

“Vests, maybe, but I don’t think we need plates, we aren’t going to get into combat.”

“How do you know?”

“I meant that it isn’t likely we’ll get into combat. I suppose it could always happen, Sue. We’re going to have enough trouble just finding some soft body armor this late in the game.”

My wife handled the money and she was of Scotch-Irish ancestry. The Scotch mostly showed through, she was always looking for a deal. I was very surprised when the order from Ammoman had come. She had 12,000-rounds of 7.62x51mm ammo and 2,500-rounds of .45ACP. She’d also purchased a 10-pack of new 7-round magazines for the pistols and a bundle of 80 20-round M-14 magazines. If you’ve ever carried 800 rounds of that 7.62 ammo, you know how heavy it is. Sue claimed that she only bought 80 because it was a package price, a likely story. I figured maybe 4 mag pouches per ALICE set; that would give us 160 rounds plus the 20 in the M1A. We could each carry 4 spare

M1911 magazines too. Well, I could carry 6 and she could carry 4, dividing the spares up between us. That was because the surplus store only had the canvas 2-magazine pouches.

We bought 2 new sets of ALICE gear, which I assumed was after market, probably made in China. We found 2 level III vests available, new. They were made by Point Blank and called The Storm. I asked the guy who sold them about that Zylon fiber I heard about and he told me that he didn't carry them. He asked if we had shotguns and I told him no. Before we got out of the store, we each had new Ruger 10/22s and Remington 11-87s, parkerized with 7 shot magazine extension and Wilson Combat Ghost Ring (rear) plus XS (front) sights. We also had extra magazines for the Rugers and 2 cases of Remington Tactical 00 buck. How is a fella going to shoot 5 guns at one time?

Since both Sue and I had applied for and gotten CCW's after we'd bought the farm, we could carry anywhere not prohibited by law (basically the Courthouse and on the Reservations). Sue got involved in a conversation with the guy at the gun store and he told her he had whatever it was she asked about. He gave her some forms and told her to get them signed by the Sheriff. Meanwhile, he handed her a plain brown paper bag and told her that once she brought the paperwork back, it would take about 90 days. I didn't see the size of the check she wrote; lucky her, I would have killed her on the spot.

"Sue, what did you buy?"

"Accessories for our M1As."

"What kind of accessories?"

"Flashhiders."

"They already have flashhiders."

"Not as good as these, they don't. The one's I got completely hide the flash."

"Nothing completely hides the flash except a suppressor."

"These completely hide the flash, Barry, trust me."

The last time Sue had told me to trust her she'd gone to town and came home with the Dodge Ram 3500. It had 4WD, a standard cab, long bed, Cummins turbo diesel engine, auxiliary fuel tank and 12k Warn winch. She bought a rifle rack for the back window and a CD of Patsy Cline's Great Hits, so I forgave her. I never did find out how much she paid for the pickup, she said she'd paid cash and that it was in both of our names. She also claimed they gave her a fair trade-in on our old car and that paid for all of the accessories.

“There is a 90-day waiting period for a suppressor, Sue. You have to get fingerprints, get the Sheriff to sign off and wait for the BATF to approve the purchase.”

“That’s right and in the meantime, we’re just holding them. I’ll do the thing with the Sheriff, I’ve never even had a traffic ticket.”

“I priced those things, what brand did you buy?”

“Surefire.”

“They’re about \$1,700 each!”

“You obviously have shopped. That’s right, \$1,672 plus sales tax, the \$200 tax stamp and the Sheriff’s fees. But, they’re very good flashhiders. I sort of look at the sound suppression as a bonus, two for the price of one.”

“We going to end up in jail, you know.”

“Right, Barry, just after the Chinese attack.”

o

“Why are you so certain that’s going to happen?”

“Think about it, Barry. If the Chinese had waited until Bush was out and a Democrat in, they probably wouldn’t have had a problem. I’m convinced that’s why Taiwan declared Independence when they did, during the 2008 Olympics. Bush pulled the American participants out signaling that he might attack Beijing. He did nothing to respond to the North Koreans nuking Japan. According to what you’ve told me you’ve seen on TV, the 82nd Airborne is moving west. You also said that we had 2 CSGs in the area already.”

“I can’t fault your logic, Sue, but the United States would never launch nuclear weapons first.”

“They tested a ship-launched missile that took out a reentry vehicle in 2005 that worked. It isn’t going to do us any good if they’re all in the Far East. What kind of missile was it?”

“That was a RIM-161, Standard Missile-3. It was fired from the *Lake Erie*, a Ticonderoga class Guided Missile Cruiser. If I understand, it’s a Theatre Defense Missile for defending ships. The Navy has it deployed on all of the Aegis Cruisers and possibly some of the Guided Missile Destroyers. Although THAAD began deployment this year, I wouldn’t count on THAAD if I were you. They haven’t made enough tests. Between that and the PAC-3, we might kill a portion of the incoming warheads.”

“Is there anything else we can do to prepare, Barry?”

“Pray I guess. We should stay close to home and keep a radio or the TV on all of the time.”

“I’ve read that we should have a ham band radio, where could we get one of those?”

“Amateur Electronic Supply or Ham Radio Outlet. I’ve looked into it and we’d need at least 2 antennas, a tri-band UHF/VHF and a 10-band HF antenna. We can buy one radio with all of the frequencies and get a mast we can raise. What I’m not sure of is, is whether we could get the equipment here in time.”

“Do you have the model numbers and all of the information?”

“Kenwood TS-2000 with or without the extra module. Then a MFJ-1798 10 Band vertical that covers 75/80, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12, 10, 6 and 2 meters and a Comet antenna that covers 2m, 70cm and 23cm. We should have a CB too for local communications.”

“I’ll call them if you have the numbers.”

“Ask them how fast they could get the equipment here. We can pay for overnight if they can ship it. We should be able to get a mast in Alamogordo.”

“How long do we have?”

“I really wish I knew. Maybe 4 days and then we’ll either have a war or end up having spent a lot of money for nothing. You make the calls and if we can get what we need, order it.”

“Make me a list Barry and I’ll call.”

o

“What did you get?”

“A TS-2000X, a MFJ-1798, a Comet tri-bander, a power supply, a spool of RG-213U and it is all coming UPS Red Label. We’d better get into to Alamogordo and arrange for an antenna mast. I also picked up a better microphone and headphones. Are we planning on operating without a license?”

“I’d guess so, there isn’t time to get one, is there? After that stunt with the flashhiders, I can’t imagine that you’d care.”

“I’ll take the rifles with us and get the adapters installed while you’re locating the mast.”

“Fine, but take a portable radio so you can keep an ear on either KYEE or KINN.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 4

While Sue was getting the gunsmith to install and verify the alignment of the adapters, I located a mast and arranged to it to be installed the next day. I was told they'd need a concrete base and the salesman gave me written specifications. That afternoon, I dug a hole and using several sacks of Quikrete, put in the base. The mast was a US Tower MA-770MDP with standoffs for the Comet and the CB antennas.

Meanwhile, the White House made an announcement on the EAS.

My fellow Americans,

On August 1, the Republic of China declared their Independence from the People's Republic of China. In the aftermath, I recalled our Olympic Team from Beijing and they have arrived in America. We didn't respond to the North Korean attack on Japan, but I had already ordered the Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Group to sail from Japan, so it was in the clear.

During the same period of time, our Carrier Strike Groups steamed to Taiwan. The Kitty Hawk and Reagan Strike Groups have been on scene for several days and will be joined in the next 48 hours by 4 additional groups. Several days ago, I instructed the Department of Homeland Security to instruct all citizens to prepare for a contingency and assemble a 2-weeks supply of food and water.

The avian flu epidemic has been contained but it appears that a possibility exists that the Chinese could attack the United States. Your government has relocated to shelters and will continue to operate in the event if an attack. At the conclusion of my message, FEMA representatives will provide instructions for sheltering in place. As of this time, we are unsure of the next move the People's Republic will take.

With the exception of our naval vessels and the 82nd Airborne Division, our entire military is presently in the United States. Any action on the part of the United States will be limited to responding to attacks against the people of the Republic of China and our own country.

Our ABM Systems that were brought online earlier this year will intercept any attack against the United States. The Chinese leaders may be assured that we will respond in kind. Our assessment indicates the possibility of Beijing launching as many as 154 weapons against this country. I have ordered that every missile launched be responded to by our Trident D missile system. I urge the Chinese leaders to reconsider any possible attack against this country and discontinue their attack against the Republic of China.

"We're in trouble."

"Why do you say that?"

“He didn’t say anything about Laura and he didn’t end the message with God Bless America. And, he didn’t do anything to respond to the North Koreans nuking Japan.”

++++

The following day, the installer from Alamogordo assembled the radio tower and installed the base plate, suggesting that the tower only be installed when the Quikrete finished curing. Late in the afternoon, UPS showed up with the items Sue had ordered. She called the installer to return the following day to install the antennas and run the coax and mast controls to the basement. Meanwhile, I examined the basement with an eye to surviving fallout. The only opening into the basement from the outside was the coal chute so I didn’t need to worry about blocking any windows. Just to be extra safe, I moved some of the woodpile to cover the opening, a metal door.

The more I looked, the more I realized that about the only thing we had in the basement to provide shielding was the 5 cords of wood stacked in that corner. I figured we had one day, maybe two, to come up with an expedient shelter to protect the two of us against possible fallout if TSHTF in earnest. I hadn’t listened to the news and Sue had spent her time talking to the fella about the mast. 38” of wood had a protection factor of 10 while 16” of earth gave an equal amount of protection. I called the lumberyard to bring a load of 4x4s and some plywood; I intended to build an improvised shelter in the corner.

Because the basement had a 12’ ceiling, I could build a shelter large enough for us to stand up in, 6’ high and put it around the stool and sink, thus ensuring us a water supply. While I waited for the lumber delivery, I began filling cardboard boxes with soil. I found that if I filled them more than ½ way full, they were too heavy to lift. The lumber came late in the afternoon and I was up all night sawing and hammering. I eked out a 12’ x 12’ x 6’ shelter around the basement bathroom. Then I began to dump the boxes of soil on the top until I had 72” of dirt.

“Did you work all night?”

“I did, yes, keep you up?”

“I didn’t notice after a while. How far did you get?”

“The shelter is framed in and covered with 72” of dirt; I’ll refill the boxes and wrap the walls in boxes of dirt.”

“How much protection is that shelter going to provide?”

“I figure it has a protection factor of almost 10,000, Sue. Not now, but it will when I have it surrounded with dirt and wood.”

“What do we have to cook on?”

“A Coleman stove and a 2 burner hotplate.”

“That fella is installing the antennas and running the wire today. You want the radio in the shelter?”

“That would give it the best EMP protection, so I suppose so.”

“Do you really think they’re going to attack?”

“I hope not, but if they do, we should be able to survive. We didn’t respond to the attack on Japan, but I expect we will nuke the North eventually.”

“Sometimes I almost wonder why we’d want to. What’s going to be left? The US was already in very poor condition and that avian flu almost pulled our plug. The good news is that we’ll be rich when it’s all over.”

“Why would that be?”

“We got a quarter million clear for our home. We bought this place cheap and I invested some of the excess in gold and silver. I picked the gold up for about \$350 an ounce. I checked the Internet and the price of gold today is over \$650 an ounce. If we have a war, it will more than double overnight, Barry. We have everything we need to survive for a very long time, a good well, food, fuel and a means of protection. Anything we don’t have, we can buy.”

“I didn’t know you bought gold. Where to you keep it?”

“In my cedar chest at the foot of our bed, under the quilts.”

“How much do we have?”

“300 ounces of gold in the various sizes of coins plus 600 ounces of silver in one ounce coins.”

“Why didn’t you tell me? What if something had happened to you?”

“You’d have tried to move the cedar chest and figured it out; it’s 75 pounds of precious metal. I left the purchase invoices with the coins.”

“We need to get those 2 boys back out here to help me move the dirt and the cedar chest to the basement.”

“I’ll call the firewood man, how long do you think you’ll need them?”

“Offer the boys \$50 apiece, they’ll come.”

I erected a wall 72” out from the wall of the shelter and followed the FEMA plans, creating an L-shaped entrance. All I needed to do was to fill the space with soil and stack the firewood around the whole thing. The boys showed up an hour later and it was the best \$100 we ever spent, our improvised shelter was finished.

o

Meanwhile the Carrier Strike Groups had reached Taiwan and were spread around the east of the island nation. They put up a BAR-CAP to prevent Chinese fighters from attacking Taiwan and began to decimate the Chinese forces that had landed on the island in the week since the attack. The date was August 16, 2008. Back in the US, the forces remained at DEFCON 2. The fleets were at modified condition Zebra, just short of being at General Quarters.

“Bridge, CIC.”

“Bridge, aye”

“Captain, we have a launch.”

“Details?”

“Sir, it appears to be a CSS-2.”

“General Quarters! Notify the Carrier that we are attempting to intercept a nuclear warhead. Contact the Destroyers and the other Cruiser and determine if they’re tracking. Get those RIM-161s enabled and set to automatic launch.”

“Tracking.”

“Sir we have additional launches.”

“Headed for us?”

“Negative, the other CSGs.”

“Pass the word.”

“Sir, we have an AEGIS initiated launch.”

Meanwhile from aboard the Reagan, National Command Authority was being notified that the 7 CSGs had come under attack, presumably by CSS-2 missiles capable of carrying a single nuclear warhead or a conventional warhead. In New Mexico, NCA raised the United States to DEFCON 1 and forwarded the launch codes to 4 of the Ohio-class

SSBNs on a 6-hour hold. Absent a rescission of the order, the subs would launch in just under 6-hours with one missile attacking North Korea and the others China. The B-2 bombers were launched and directed to Area 51 where round the clock work was ongoing to make the F-117s airworthy.

◦

Off Taiwan, the AEGIS Cruisers successfully intercepted all but one of the incoming warheads.

“Mr. President, they got the Kitty Hawk CSG.”

“Any specifics?”

“It’s too early to tell.”

“Have there been any other launches?”

“Negative.”

“Bob, I think we should leave the Boomers on the 6-hour hold until we get this sorted out.”

“I concur.”

“Mr. President, is that wise? If we don’t rescind the orders, those subs will automatically launch.”

“Mr. Hadley, I understand. However, we would lose 30-minutes if we rescinded the orders and then had to turn around and reissue them. Set it up to automatically rescind the orders at 5-hours, we should know our situation by then.”

“Yes sir.”

◦

Have you seen the aftermath of the tests at Bikini Atoll? The US has produced the biggest ever man-made explosion so far in the Pacific archipelago of Bikini, part of the Marshall Islands. It is believed the hydrogen bomb was up to 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. It was so violent that it overwhelmed the measuring instruments, indicating that the bomb was much more powerful than scientists had anticipated. The bomb was the equivalent of 20m tons of TNT.

The Asian Question – Chapter 5

One of the atolls has been totally vaporized, disappearing into a gigantic mushroom cloud that spread at least 100 miles wide and dropping back to the sea in the form of radioactive fallout. The Atomic Energy Commission announced this was the first in a series of tests to be carried out in the area. Tests first began in Bikini in 1946 after the natives were moved to the island of Rongerik, then to Ujelan a year later and to Kili on 1949. This is the second H-bomb test in the area. A 10.4-megaton bomb was exploded on 1 November 1952 at Enewatak, west of Bikini. It destroyed one island and left a crater 175 feet deep. It was hundreds of times more powerful than that used over Hiroshima. Unlike that device which tapped energy by splitting atomic nuclei, the Enewetak weapon forced together nuclei of hydrogen to unleash an even greater destructive force.

In the shelter at Holloman AFB, the NCA had made a decision that the United States would wait and see about NOT starting WW III. It would depend on the outcome of the Chinese attack on the US fleet. That was an interesting decision; would the Chinese government also wait to attack the US mainland? No one was angry at the Japanese for their failed response to Hurricane Katrina, but the slate was even now. They could sit in the radioactive waste and count their Yen. The national government of Japan was criticized for not acting quickly enough to save many people, for poorly managing Japanese volunteers, and for initially refusing help from foreign nations, including the US, Korea and England.

From one viewpoint the attack on Japan by North Korea could be seen as justice for the Japanese actions from 1905 until 1945. A person can't fault George W. Bush for wanting to avoid war with China and arguably an attack on North Korea would provoke a Chinese attack on the US. With the attacks on the CSGs, the Chinese intentions became clear. Had the RIM-161s taken out all of the Chinese warheads, we still wouldn't know anything.

++++

“Mr. President, the Chinese have launched on the US.”

“Activate the EAS and warn the people. Instruct the SSBNs to launch immediately and activate the ABM system. Someone let the Russians know that were launching 96 missiles, 95 against China and 1 against North Korea. We wouldn't want them to respond.”

“Mr. President, I concur.”

“Thanks, Bob, I knew you wouldn't let me down.”

Most people think that the National Command Authority is the President of the United States. The term National Command Authority (NCA) is used in United States military and government circles to refer to the ultimate lawful source of military orders. Though

the term is singular, it in reality refers to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

Only the NCA can order the use of nuclear weapons, including the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). Neither individual, by himself, can order that strategic nuclear weapons be used against any country or region. If the NCA determines that a nuclear strike is necessary, they must jointly inform the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who in turn will direct a general officer on duty in the National Military Command Center (NMCC) at the Pentagon to execute the SIOP.

The use of the term dates from the Cold War era in which the United States and Soviet Union had nuclear missiles on constant alert and a responsible official had to be available to authorize a retaliatory strike within a matter of minutes. Detailed Continuity of Government plans provided for monitoring the whereabouts of certain key government officials who would become the National Command Authority if the President were himself victim of an enemy attack.

The Trident D-5 missiles with their 8 W88 300-475 kiloton MIRVs each could wipe out all major population centers in North Korea and the People's Republic of China. Staggered launching permitted multiple weapons on a single target. The US had pulled its athletes and warned others to do the same. It should be noted that some countries took his advice, especially Israel. The Chinese assumed that with the 2008 Games in Beijing, the US wouldn't attack their Capitol. They launched 36 DF-31A with 3 MIRV'd 350kT warheads, 36 DF-5As with single 3mT warheads, 12 JuLang-1 with 250kT warheads and the 24 JuLang-2 carrying 3 250kT warheads. Surprisingly although the Chinese had originally invented the missile, they were latecomers when it came to inter-continental ballistic missiles. Their missiles had a far greater CEP, but with the larger warheads on most of their missiles, what difference did it make?

How's your math? The United States only has 400 W88 warheads and at 8 per that means that only 80 of the missiles were armed with the 475kT warheads. The remaining 16 were armed with W76 warheads at 100kT each. They were the follow on missiles launched last in the sequence, 4 each by each of the boomers. Once the initial wave of warheads did the major damage, a smaller explosion was just as devastating. It's off the point, but the reason that the US didn't have W88 pits for all of the 336 D-5 missiles was because the Rocky Flats Plant in Colorado had been closed and no one else could produce the pits.

The Chinese targeted the DF-31A missiles on the highest priority targets and the DF-5A on the largest population centers. The 12 Ju Lang-1 missiles with a range of 1,700km were limited to low priority west coast targets. The US had 2 Battalions of THAAD launchers and each Battalion 4 batteries. The THAAD battery will typically operate nine launch vehicles each carrying eight missiles, with two mobile tactical operations centers (TOCs) and ground-based radar (GBR). The 9th battery was located at Holloman AFB, supposedly for further testing.

In a typical combat scenario, THAAD's X-band, phased array, solid-state radar will scan the horizon for hostile missiles. It was be capable of detecting threats at a range of 1,000 kilometers. Once an incoming missile had been detected, the X-band radar would relay this information to the C2BMC unit, a mobile command center installed on HMMWVs that manages and integrates all THAAD components. C2BMC units are capable of linking THAAD with other missile defense layers to strengthen the overall Ballistic Missile Defense System. C2BMC is also responsible for determining friend from foe.

A typical THAAD battery will include nine M1075 truck-mounted launchers to transport and fire the interceptors. Each launcher is 12 meters long, 3.25 meters wide, and carries 10 missiles. The Army will be able to transport the launchers by C-130 aircraft for rapid deployment. After firing, the launcher will take approximately 30 minutes to reload. The interceptor missile itself is 6.17 meters long, 0.34 meters in diameter, and weighs 900 kilograms. It is powered by a single stage solid fuel rocket motor with thrust vectoring. Although the interceptor is not designed to track long-range ballistic missiles, MDA has not yet ruled out the possibility of upgrading the system to accommodate greater range and velocity.

Following the launch, the interceptor will receive targeting information from the ground-based X-band radar. After its burnout stage, the interceptor's kill vehicle (KV) will separate from the booster. The KV is equipped with a liquid Divert and Attitude Control System (DAVS), which will maneuver the KV toward the target interception point. An infrared seeker in the KV's nose will home in on the target. At the point of impact, the KV will collide with the incoming missile (like a bullet hitting a bullet), causing complete destruction of the warhead including any nuclear, chemical, or biological agents.

The US Army acquired 80 THAAD launchers, 18 ground based radars and a total of 1,422 THAAD missiles. Two THAAD battalions existed, each with four batteries. The bottom line was that the US could intercept the Chinese missiles, within the limits of the new and largely unproven system. George W. Bush was relying on a tested, but unproven, system. And, as was pointed out, the THAAD missile system was backed by PAC-3 batteries. The NCA didn't have a feel on the JL-2 because it wasn't expected to be ready until the type 094 was ready. Therefore, 72 warheads which could reach the east coast went unanswered.

o

"Do you have everything we need in the basement, Sue?"

"Why?"

"According to the EAS, the United States is under attack."

"I hope they think that Bush is in Mt. Weather or NORAD. Help me move a few things to the basement and we're good to go."

“I’ve been thinking about that, Bush came to New Mexico at the same time they evacuated Washington, DC. I’m beginning to believe that the Chinese might not realize he’s in New Mexico. He’s a crafty one.”

“Is that a nice way of saying he’s one sneaky SOB?”

“The only target of interest would be Albuquerque unless they know he’s here. It might turn out that we won’t have much fallout to deal with.”

“Even so, we’re better start taking the Potassium Iodate. You didn’t build a real shelter and there is nothing to keep a little radioactive Iodine from slipping into the basement.”

“What did you buy from Radmeters4U?”

“Their standard package deal plus 4 extra bottles of KIO_3 and 4 extra dosimeters.”

“You move your things to the basement and I’ll get the mattress, we’ll need something to sleep on.”

“Have we overlooked anything?”

“God, I hope not. I meant to tell you, they have one THAAD launcher and one Pac-3 launcher at Holloman.”

“I don’t know if that’s a relief or a cause for concern.”

“Time to tuck in Sue and pray for the best.”

◦

Once Barry and Sue were in their improvised shelter, Barry disconnected the antennas from the back of the T-2000X and turned on an AM radio to follow the action. Alamogordo is 209 road miles or about 160 line-of-sight miles from Albuquerque. Albuquerque was hit by one of the JL-1 missiles which detonated its warhead at ~2,000’. The EMP was enough to knock out all radio stations in a 175-mile radius. When the radio died, Barry noted the date and time: August 20, 2008 at 2:25pm, (20Aug08, 2125 Zulu.) Sue finished replacing the batteries in the CD V-715 and turned it on to the lowest range. She then charged 2 dosimeters and gave one of the two to Barry. Finally, she handed him a bottle off KIO_3 and told him to initiate prophylactic therapy.

Sue nursed dinner to completion on the electric burner and they ate around 5pm. At that point in time, the radiation level hadn’t changed. After dinner, Barry reconnected the T-2000X and started listening, but couldn’t receive anything but static. He busied himself sharpening their 2 KA-BAR knives to a razor’s edge. Next, he connected their laptop to

the Ethernet cable and tried to bring up the Internet. He was unable to log on to his ISP. Finally, they folded the table, laid the mattress flat and called it a night.

o

The next morning the Survey meter indicated a small amount of radiation, almost too little to measure in the confined shelter area. He slid the probe around the corner to check the basement and it jumped to 150mR.

“What is the reading in the basement?”

“150mR, so apparently the fallout came in during the night.”

“I’ll get a pad and we’ll try and monitor it every hour and keep track. Do you know about the 7-10 rule?”

“I used to, remind me.”

“For every 7 fold increase in time, the radiation drops 90%. My father made us all learn 7-49-373-2,401.”

“What’s for breakfast?”

“Cereal and milk. There’s another gallon of milk in the basement refrigerator when it’s safe to get it.”

“I can hear the generator so I assume we lost electricity. Should we try and monitor the radio or just play cribbage?”

“Check the radio but if all we’re getting is static, leave the darned thing off.”

“I guess we should have planned this better, Sue. I’d be a lot more comfortable in a dedicated shelter.”

“Time to check the radiation level again.”

“175mR and still negligible inside.”

“Good, it should start to drop soon. At least if they tried to hit Alamogordo we were able to intercept the incoming warheads.”

“How long to you figure we’ll be down here?”

“That’s hard to say this early.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 6

“Once the radiation level is under 100mR, we should be free to move around the basement. We can live there and leave the mattress set up in here to sleep at night. We’re bound to get fallout from San Diego, Los Angeles and Phoenix.”

“Is that some magic number, 100mR?”

“The limit for 120 days is 300R or 2.5R per day. That’s 104mR per hour but my father always said that anything over 50mR was too much for children and people of child-bearing age. I don’t think we’ll have to worry about that, so we can handle a level of 100mR for 16 hours plus a negligible level for 8 hours. We’ll be getting approximately 66mR per hour, well within limits.”

“So even at the present level, we’re free to get something out of the refrigerator or freezer?”

“Absolutely. You know, sometimes I’m just too frugal for my own good, Hon. I could have bought a survey meter with a remote sensor and we wouldn’t be guessing what the radiation level was outside.”

“As far as that goes, we could have spent \$50 grand on an independent shelter, Sue and then it wouldn’t matter. This seems to have worked out so why worry about it? I can’t think of a single reason we have to leave the basement until its safe.”

“There you go not wearing your thinking cap, Barry. You’re going to have to change the oil in the generator, it can’t run forever without being serviced.”

“The owner’s manual says to change the oil filter every 200 hours and the oil every 20 hours. That’s fine for a new genset, but this one has plenty of time on it. I think it’s well past the break-in stage and we can get by changing the oil when we replace the filter. That’s a week from now. Anyway, the generator isn’t running at full power hence the engine isn’t being worked very hard.”

“You’d better be right on that because if you aren’t, we’ll ruin the engine.”

“We only have enough filters to change the oil 6 times and each oil change takes 7 quarts of oil. It’s obvious to me that I should have gotten more filters and oil at the auto parts store.”

“Do you have the part number?”

“Onan 122-0833 or Fram PH3593A. That filter fits all of the HDK series. I’ll have to find enough of those to change the oil 46 more times. And, with 4 oil changes per case, we’re going to need a dozen cases of oil. The fuel filter is Onan 149-2513 or Fram P3500.”

“Why so many?”

“Because the woman I’m married to insisted on having enough fuel for about a year for the generator.”

++++

TICK, Tick, tick...

Within a week, the basement was totally safe and the outside radiation level was down to the point where Barry could service the generator. The Alamogordo area didn’t really get that much fallout and if any incoming had been aimed their way, the ABMs must have gotten them. Neither Sue nor Barry knew because they’d been in the basement. There was an eerie silence, almost spooky. The Dodge started so the area didn’t get any EMP. And, they didn’t have any livestock to attend so they were basically bored. Sue picked up where she left off on a quilt project and Barry armed up, grabbed a bunch of cash and headed to the auto parts store to see about getting more filters and oil.

“We’re out of a lot of parts, mister, some folks had engine problems. Probably the EMP.”

“We didn’t get any EMP up north.”

“You were lucky, what do you need?”

12 cases of SAE 30 oil, 48 Fram PH3593A oil filters and 4 Fram P3500 fuel filters.”

“We don’t take checks.”

“I have cash, can you help me or not?”

“No ignition parts?”

“My Ram runs fine.”

“I only have those filters because we carry them for that RV place. What are you doing, opening an RV service business?”

“Not exactly, no. Do you have what I need?”

“I do. That’s going to be \$936 plus tax, \$1,003.86. Make it an even grand.”

“Ouch.”

“The oil is \$25 a case, the oil filters \$12 each and the fuel filters \$15 each, is there a problem?”

“I hate saying goodbye to good old Ben, that’s all. Here you go.”

“Pull around back and we’ll load.”

“Did they have what we needed?”

“For a thousand dollars they did. I don’t think he gouged me either, that’s a lot of oil and filters.”

“What’s it like in Alamogordo?”

“Quiet as a graveyard. He said that they got EMP down there.”

“Why did your pickup start?”

“I don’t know, because I turned the key?”

“I guess that explains why there haven’t been any radio or TV stations on the air.”

“Does your sewing machine work ok?”

“Sure, why wouldn’t it?”

“It might not work if we’d gotten any EMP; it’s nothing but an electric motor that has an integrated circuit to control the stitches.”

“Well, it works fine.”

◦

“I wonder if we can top off the fuel tank.”

“How much have we used?”

“About 150 gallons.”

“It hardly seems worth it. Besides, I don’t think they deliver for any purchase less than 300 gallons.”

“It’s chilly out, do you think I should start a fire in the furnace?”

“Before September 1st? Don’t be ridiculous. Stay in the kitchen, it’s warm because I’m going to bake bread.”

“I should probably sit on the front porch and guard the place.”

“Right, you’re cold so instead of staying in the kitchen where it’s warm, you want to sit outside where it’s cold.”

“But Sue, we just had a war with the Chinese. They must have succeeded in detonating some weapons if they have an EMP problem in Alamogordo.”

“We don’t have any EMP damage here. You went into Alamogordo and bought parts for the generator. Why do you believe that we’ll have any trouble?”

“I don’t know, just a feeling. I’ll go listen to the ham radio.”

Barry didn’t know much about the radio because he wasn’t a ham. He did know that he could listen to just about any frequency.

“Hey Sue, I got something.”

“What frequency?”

“Uh, 243.000.”

“What does it sound like?”

“It sounds like a pilot giving instructions to another pilot.”

“What about?”

“One guy is telling another to land his airplane at Holloman and the other is telling him to kiss his butt.”

“I have a reference chart, let me check and see what that frequency is used for. Did you say 243.000?” (UHF Guard)

“Yeah.”

“That’s an air emergency frequency.”

“Let me keep looking, maybe I can find more. Wait, I have the same military pilot on 121.500. (VHF Guard) I don’t know who he’s trying to talk to, but he sounds po’d. He’s threatening to shoot the guy down.”

“That’s an international air emergency frequency.”

“I’ve got to get outside and see if I can see the flames.”

“What flames?”

“The other guy didn’t reply and the military guy said he was going to shoot him down. He advised the ground he was returning to base.”

“That’s mean!”

“Bush is in the area, what do you expect? They threaten those pilots that over fly Washington with being shot down. I don’t fly, but if I was in a plane and a military jet came around wagging his wings and dropping flares, I’d sure respond. Hang on, I’m going to look and see if I can see anything.”

“Wow! Remind me to never ignore the Air Force. There was a blob of smoke off to the west of due south that trailed down to the ground in a nearly vertical stream. If I’d have gone sooner, I could have seen the plane get shot down.”

If I could have boxed and sold the look Sue gave me, I’d be a wealthy man today. Anyway, I decided right on the spot to start making notes about what happened over the course of the past several weeks. I backed up to August 1, 2008, the date the snowball started rolling down the hill. I wrote down what information I’d gleaned of the radio and TV and did my best to recall the sequence of events. I wish now that I’d paid more attention to Sue and her cockamamie survivalism. We could have had a stand-alone shelter and avoided any risk down in the improvised shelter in the basement.

I am as sure as I can be now that we’d have had 3 times as much diesel fuel and more food. We would have had the CD V-717 remote sensing survey meter too. I wouldn’t have been surprised that Sue had 75-pounds of gold and silver in her cedar chest. Cedar Chest??? If I had known, it would have been in a safe! What was it she said about the price of gold, \$650 an ounce? Didn’t she suggest that with the attack it would double in value? Let’s see, $300 \times \$1,300 = \$390,000$. We’re rich!

“Sue, when did you buy the gold?”

“Mid-March of 2003.”

“What did you give for the silver?”

“\$4.50 an ounce.”

“And what was it worth when you check the gold price recently?”

“\$8.75 an ounce.”

$600 \times \$17.50 = \$10,500 + \$390,000 = \$400,500$. Hmm, I think we’ll try to hang onto the gold and use up the silver. Our profit was $\$282,000 + \$7,800 = \$289,800$.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 7

“Sue?”

“What now?”

“Why didn’t you buy more?”

“I spent \$110,000. I thought you flip your lid.”

“I probably would have at the time, but we’re rich. You said it was probably double the price the last time you checked, did I understand you right?”

“Nothing wrong with your ears, why?”

“The cedar chest contains about \$400,500 worth of gold and silver.”

“That ought to keep us in Diesel and food for a while.”

“You don’t suppose you could find another diesel fuel tank could you?”

“I doubt it, all he had was that one used tank. With the attack, I’d bet dollars to donuts that everyone and their brothers want a tank and a generator. How long will that supply of oil and filters last?”

“Over a year. An average year contains 365.25 days or 8,766 hours. If I service it every 200 hours, I can keep it going for a total of $((5+48)*200) = 10,600$ hours. If we never go over ½ load, we’d have enough fuel for 6,250 hours. That’s why I asked about another diesel tank. If we had 2,000 additional gallons we have almost as much run time as we have oil and filters because that would add another 4,167 hours.”

“The salesman said the generator would probably need to be rebuilt after 15,000-hours. Maybe we should try and find the parts now. It’s a 3-cylinder engine so it wouldn’t take a lot of parts. Maybe bearings, a set of rings and new injectors and glow plugs. I’m sure we could find someone to rebuild it.”

“What would we do for power in the meantime?”

“We could get a 5kw portable gasoline genset and it could cover when I have to turn the standby down to service it. Or, we could do what we did last time and just go without power for a little while.”

“Could you find a small diesel fueled genset?”

“Now? I doubt it. I’d be lucky to find any genset, you said so yourself. Maybe a gas powered set and 25-gallons of gas would cover us for most of the year.”

“Get your equipment Barry and let’s head to Alamogordo. We’ll see if we can get repair parts for the Kubota engine and a 5kw portable. We might as well get another set of filters and oil while we’re at it.”

++++

“Run out of oil and filters so soon?”

“No, but I was wondering if you had more.”

“I just happen to have 2 more cases of 24. Do you want the same number of fuel filters and motor oil?”

“Yep. Price still the same, 10 Ben Franklins?”

“That’s right. Are you sure you’re not starting up an RV repair facility?”

“No, our standby generator is one of those RV generators the HDKCB. I don’t suppose you have any idea where a guy could get parts for the engine do you?”

“I have a standard rebuild kit we assemble for our RV dealer. It has: injectors, all new bearings, rings, seals and gaskets. Most of the time, you don’t have to sleeve the engine, but we have sleeve sets and new pistons provided you want them.”

“I want everything we might possibly need. In fact, I take a rebuilt set and the sleeve set.”

“Last name Rockefeller?”

“No, why?”

“You’re spending money like you own Standard Oil. Which engine?”

“The 1,647cc, 3-cylinder Kubota diesel.”

“Good engine, you won’t need the sleeves. The repair parts sets are \$1,000 including tax. Got another 10 of old Ben?”

“Don’t forget the 12 cases of SAE 30 oil, 48 Fram PH3593A oil filters and 4 Fram P3500 fuel filters.”

“You count the money and I’ll get the order around. Anything else?”

“We were looking for a gasoline 5kw portable generator and fuel cans.”

“Used ok?”

“Sure, we won’t be running it much.”

“I could sell you the store’s extra generator. It has low hours since the last time it was rebuilt. It’s rated at 5.5kw with a 6kw surge capacity. You’ll need another case of oil and gas cans. I ran out of cans, but I have a clean empty 55-gallon drum. \$100 for the drum and the case of oil.”

“Ok, \$2,100. How much for that generator, you didn’t say?”

“\$900.”

“Sue?”

“Everything we wanted in one stop? Why not.”

“Deal.”

“Keep counting and stop when you get to 30. Say, did you see that airplane get shot down?”

“I was listening on the radio and heard the military pilot warn him several times. By the time I made it outside, all I saw was the small cloud and the trail of smoke straight to the ground.”

“The plane landed more or less safely.”

“No way.”

“Yeah, the Air Force pilot used his cannon instead of a missile. He took out the Cessna’s engine and the guy made a dead stick landing at Holloman.”

“Do you know what happened?”

“They issued a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) restricting the airspace and the way I heard it, the pilot of the Cessna didn’t know about it. Anyway, he’s in a military stockade at Holloman until they sort out who he is and what he was doing in the restricted airspace.”

“Any idea why he didn’t respond to the fighter?”

“Heard his radios were out.”

“I’m not a pilot, but I can’t believe you’d be allowed to fly without radios.”

“You can’t, legally, the way I hear. That’s part of the reason he’s in trouble.”

o

The Important NOTAMs concerning Washington DC:

!FDC 5/1254 ZDC FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS WASHINGTON, DC. EFFECTIVE FROM 0502130501 UTC UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE PURSUANT TO 14 CFR SECTION 99.7, SPECIAL SECURITY INSTRUCTIONS, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES FOR OPERATIONS AT CERTAIN AIRPORTS IN THE WASHINGTON DC METROPOLITAN AREA FLIGHT RESTRICTED ZONE (FRZ) ARE IN EFFECT:

PART I. DEFINITION. THE WASHINGTON DC METROPOLITAN AREA FLIGHT RESTRICTED ZONE (FRZ) IS DEFINED AS AN AREA BOUNDED BY A LINE BEGINNING AT THE WASHINGTON /DCA/ VOR/DME 300 DEGREE RADIAL AT 15 NM 385655N/0772008W THENCE CLOCKWISE ALONG THE DCA 15 NM ARC TO THE DCA 022 DEGREE RADIAL AT 15 NM 390611N/0765751W THENCE SOUTHEAST VIA A LINE DRAWN TO THE DCA 049 DEGREE RADIAL AT 14 NM 390218N/0765038W THENCE SOUTH VIA A LINE DRAWN TO THE DCA 064 DEGREE RADIAL AT 13 NM 385901N/0764832W THENCE CLOCKWISE ALONG THE DCA 13 NM ARC TO THE DCA 282 DEGREE RADIAL AT 13 NM 385214N/0771848W THENCE NORTH VIA A LINE DRAWN TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; EXCLUDING THE AIRSPACE WITHIN A 1 NM RADIUS OF FREEWAY AIRPORT /W00/ MITCHELLVILLE, MD, FROM THE SURFACE UP TO BUT NOT INCLUDING FL180.

PART II. EXCEPT FOR DOD, LAW ENFORCEMENT, OR AEROMEDICAL FLIGHT OPERATIONS, ALL PERSONS OPERATING AN AIRCRAFT TO OR FROM THE COLLEGE PARK AIRPORT (CGS); POTOMAC AIRFIELD (VKX); OR WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE/ HYDE FIELD (W32), LOCATED WITHIN THE AIRSPACE DESIGNATED AS THE WASHINGTON D.C. METROPOLITAN AREA FRZ MUST ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING OPERATING REQUIREMENTS AND ALL ADDITIONAL GROUND SECURITY PROCEDURES AND BACKGROUND CHECKS SPECIFIED BY THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA) AS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FOR THE SECURITY OF AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS TO OR FROM THE AIRPORT.

PART III. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS:

A) NO PERSON MAY OPERATE AN AIRCRAFT TO OR FROM THE ABOVE INDICATED AIRPORTS UNLESS THE AIRPORT OPERATORS SECURITY PROCEDURES ARE APPROVED BY TSA AND MEET OR EXCEED THE PROVISIONS OF 49 CFR PART 1562.3.

B) NO PERSON MAY OPERATE AN AIRCRAFT TO OR FROM THE ABOVE INDICATED AIRPORTS UNLESS THE PILOT SATISFIES THE SECURITY PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE PROVISIONS OF 49 CFR PART 1562.3 AND HAS BEEN APPROVED BY TSA FOR OPERATIONS AT THAT AIRPORT.

C) EACH PILOT SHALL COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. FOR ALL ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES, FILE EITHER AN IFR OR VFR FLIGHT PLAN WITH LEESBURG AUTOMATED FLIGHT SERVICE STATION (AFSS), VIA TELEPHONE AT 866-225-7410. A SEPARATE FLIGHT PLAN IS REQUIRED TO DEPART AND ARRIVE AT THESE AIRPORTS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS AN INTERMEDIATE STOP.

2. FILING FLIGHT PLANS IN THE AIR IS NOT AUTHORIZED.

3. OBTAIN AN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (ATC) CLEARANCE WITH DISCRETE TRANSPONDER CODE AS DESCRIBED IN DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL PROCEDURES BELOW.

4. MAINTAIN TWO-WAY RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH ATC WHILE OPERATING WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE FRZ AND THE CLASS B AIRSPACE AREA.

5. BE EQUIPPED WITH AN OPERATIONAL MODE C TRANSPONDER.

PART IV. FLIGHT PLAN PROCEDURES:

A) EACH PILOT SHALL CALL LEESBURG AFSS AND PRIOR TO FILING FLIGHT PLAN SHALL IDENTIFY HIM/HER-SELF AND USE THE CONFIDENTIAL PILOT IDENTIFICATION CODE ASSIGNED TO THEM.

B) LEESBURG AFSS WILL ACCEPT FLIGHT PLAN AFTER VERIFYING CODE.

C) LEESBURG AFSS WILL FORWARD PILOT'S FLIGHT PLAN TO THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE.

D) PILOTS SHALL CLOSE VFR FLIGHT PLANS WITH LEESBURG AFSS ONLY AFTER THEY ARE ON THE GROUND.

E) PILOTS MAY REQUEST AND ATC MAY ACCEPT CANCELLATION OF IFR WHILE IN THE AIR. HOWEVER, PILOTS ARE REQUIRED TO REMAIN ON THEIR ASSIGNED BEACON CODE UNTIL ON THE GROUND AND REQUIRED TO CONTACT LEESBURG AFSS AFTER THEY ARE ON THE GROUND.

F) LEESBURG AFSS WILL NOTIFY THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE AND APPROPRIATE ATC FACILITIES WHEN THE FLIGHT PLANS ARE CLOSED.

PART V. AIR TRAFFIC PROCEDURES: A) DEPARTURE PROCEDURES. NO PILOT MAY OPERATE AN AIRCRAFT DEPARTING FROM ANY OF THE ABOVE 3 AIRPORTS UNLESS THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET:

1. OBTAIN AN ATC CLEARANCE FROM POTOMAC APPROACH VIA TELEPHONE NUMBER 540-349-7597.

2. IFR:

A) DEPARTING WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE/HYDE FIELD AND POTOMAC AIRPORT: ATC WILL PROVIDE EASTBOUND OR SOUTHBOUND RADAR VECTORS TO OUTSIDE THE FRZ. AIRCRAFT WILL THEN PROCEED ON COURSE AND REMAIN CLEAR OF THE FRZ.

B) DEPARTING COLLEGE PARK AIRPORT (CGS): ATC WILL PROVIDE EASTBOUND OR NORTHBOUND RADAR VECTORS TO OUTSIDE THE FRZ . AIRCRAFT WILL THEN PROCEED ON COURSE AND REMAIN CLEAR OF THE FRZ.

3. VFR - DEPARTING WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE/HYDE FIELD, POTOMAC AIRPORT, AND COLLEGE PARK AIRPORT:

A) DEPART AS ASSIGNED BY ATC, EXPECTING A HEADING DIRECTLY AWAY FROM THE FRZ AIRSPACE UNTIL TWO- WAY COMMUNICATION IS ESTABLISHED WITH POTOMAC APPROACH. AIRCRAFT WILL FLY AS ASSIGNED BY ATC UNTIL CLEAR OF THE FRZ AND/OR THE CLASS B AIRSPACE AREA.

B) ARRIVAL PROCEDURES. EACH PILOT SHALL:

1. ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS WITH ATC FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER THE FRZ.

2. VFR:

A) APPROACH TO COLLEGE PARK AIRPORT: AIRCRAFT SHALL REMAIN OUTSIDE THE FRZ AIRSPACE UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY ATC TO ENTER THE FRZ . PILOTS CAN EXPECT ROUTING TO COLLEGE PARK VIA THE VICINITY OF FREEWAY AIRPORT. END PART 6 OF 7

B) APPROACH TO POTOMAC AIRPORT AND WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE/HYDE FIELD: AIRCRAFT SHALL REMAIN OUTSIDE THE FRZ UNTIL AUTHORIZED BY ATC TO ENTER THE FRZ . PILOTS CAN EXPECT ROUTING TO POTOMAC AIRPORT AND WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE/HYDE FIELD VIA THE VICINITY OF MARYLAND AIRPORT OR NOTTINGHAM VORTAC.

3. IFR: IFR ARRIVALS TO COLLEGE PARK, POTOMAC, AND WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE/HYDE AIRPORTS ARE AUTHORIZED.

PART VI. ANY QUESTIONS ON THIS MATTER SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE FEDERAL AVIATION REPRESENTATIVE AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGIONAL COORDINATION CENTER (703) 563-3221.

IFDC 5/4121 ZDC SPECIAL ADVISORY NOTICE .. A NEW WARNING SIGNAL FOR COMMUNICATING WITH AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN DEPLOYED AND IS OPERATING WITHIN THE WASHINGTON DC METROPOLITAN AREA AIR DEFENSE IDENTIFICATION ZONE (DC ADIZ), INCLUDING THE FLIGHT RESTRICTED ZONE (FRZ). THE SIGNAL CONSISTS OF HIGHLY FOCUSED RED AND GREEN COLORED LIGHTS IN AN ALTERNATING RED/ RED/ GREEN/ SIGNAL PATTERN. THIS SIGNAL MAY BE DIRECTED AT SPECIFIC AIRCRAFT SUSPECTED OF MAKING UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY INTO THE ADIZ/FRZ AND ARE ON A HEADING OR FLIGHT PATH THAT MAY BE INTERPRETED AS A THREAT OR THAT OPERATE CONTRARY TO THE OPERATING RULES FOR THE ADIZ/FRZ. THE BEAM IS NOT INJURIOUS TO THE EYES OF PILOTS/AIRCROWS OR PASSENGERS, REGARDLESS OF ALTITUDE OR DISTANCE FROM THE SOURCE. IF YOU ARE IN COMMUNICATION WITH AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND THIS SIGNAL IS DIRECTED AT YOUR AIRCRAFT, WE ADVISE YOU TO IMMEDIATELY COMMUNICATE WITH ATC THAT YOU ARE BEING ILLUMINATED BY A VISUAL WARNING SIGNAL. IF THIS SIGNAL IS DIRECTED AT YOU AND YOU ARE NOT COMMUNICATING WITH ATC, WE ADVISE YOU TO TURN TO A HEADING AWAY FROM THE CENTER OF THE FRZ/ADIZ AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND IMMEDIATELY CONTACT ATC ON AN APPROPRIATE FREQUENCY, OR IF UNSURE OF THE FREQUENCY, CONTACT ATC ON VHF GUARD 121.5 OR UHF GUARD 243.0.

BE ADVISED THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES OUTLINED ABOVE MAY RESULT IN INTERCEPTION BY MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND/OR THE USE OF FORCE. THIS NOTICE APPLIES TO ALL AIRCRAFT OPERATING WITHIN THE ADIZ, INCLUDING DOD, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND AEROMEDICAL OPERATIONS. THIS NOTICE DOES NOT CHANGE PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED FOR REPORTING UNAUTHORIZED LASER ILLUMINATION AS PUBLISHED IN ADVISORY CIRCULAR 70-2.

That's a little longer than I planned, but I've always wanted to know how they restricted the airspace over the National Capitol. The answer is – in capital letters! They flash you in the eyes with a laser and if you ignore them, they shoot you down. Maybe, if you're very, very lucky, you won't lose your pilots license. The feds get pretty heavy handed at times and I'll bet the maximum punishment is really something.

o

“You want the pickup around back?”

The Asian Question – Chapter 8

“Yes, please. Maybe I’ll close up early today. We haven’t been able to get any replacements for the parts we’ve sold so we don’t have much left to sell. The Gun Dealer sold everything he had in about 4 hours. He locked up and hasn’t been back since.”

“We still can’t pick up any radio or TV, heard when it’s coming back on?”

“Sorry.”

“Have you heard any news from anywhere?” Sue asked.

“You knew they nuked Albuquerque?”

“No, but I’m not surprised.”

“Those ABMs they just deployed managed to shoot down about 60% of the incoming missiles. I heard that was around 90. A trucker said that he heard that 60 managed to get by the THADD and Pac-3 missiles. They had all different sizes of nukes, 250s, 350s and some 3mtT.”

“Have you heard anything about our fleet or what happened to China?”

“I heard that we launched something on North Korea and a whole bunch on China. They say that North Korea is a glowing parking lot and China isn’t much better off. Only reason I know is ‘cause some Sergeant from the Motor Pool at Holloman needed some part he couldn’t get and came around the parts stores here in town. Pretty tight lipped, but he did say that China and North Korea wouldn’t be a problem for almost forever.”

“Did we nuke Beijing?”

“He didn’t say. That’s their Capitol, ain’t it? They got Washington so I suppose we got Beijing. Why?”

“The 2008 Olympic Games were in Beijing. If we hit it, I’ll bet we lost a lot of friends.”

“Only countries really friendly to the US were the UK and Australia. Canada was on-again off-again and them Méxicans lie through their teeth.”

“I hope the English keep their stiff upper lip.”

++++

We had that little gas powered backup so we wouldn’t lose lights when I shut down the 12kw genset to change the oil. Sue insisted we go by the Chevron station to fill the 55-gallon drum with gas and I’ll be damned if they weren’t open. The guy behind the coun-

ter told us where to go to find out about more diesel fuel. We went and found out the guy maybe fibbed a little when he talked to Sue. There set a new 1,000-gallon farm tank and several larger used tanks.

“You open for business?”

“For now I am, help you?”

“We have 2 diesel tanks, a 1,000 and a used 2,000 we bought from you. We were thinking we could use another tank, 2,000 or bigger.”

“You want fuel too?”

“You still have some?”

“Several hundred thousand gallons. With the trouble, there aren’t many trucks on the road and the truck stop isn’t taking deliveries. I’m sorry but we’re only taking cash, the banks can’t get their computers to work.”

“Sue, how much cash do you have tucked away?”

“250,” she whispered

“\$250?” I asked.

“No! 250 Ben Franklins,” she hissed.

“Uh, I guess the wife has the money. Can you bring by a tank and some fuel?”

“COD.”

“Hey, no problem, the wife is covering our six.”

“How big of a tank do you want?”

“How big do you have?”

“Bigger than you want. How about that 5,000-gallon tank? Give you a fair price, \$4,000.”

“How much for the fuel?”

“5,000-gallons at \$4 per gallon, \$20,000.”

“We just paid \$2.75 last fill up,” Sue said.

“That was then, this is now.”

“Sue?”

“Mister, it isn’t always going to be the day after Armageddon, \$3.50 and not a penny more. I’ll give you \$2,500 for that rusty old tank. That’s \$20,000, cash money, take it or leave it.”

“Lady I’m going to have them lined up at the door, I’ll leave it.”

“Right, we pushed to the head of the line just to buy your rusty old tank. How many people you figure can pay cash?”

“You can’t keep that fuel good for very long. I sell PRI products too.”

“Fine, we’ll take 4 gallons each of PRI-D and PRI-Flow and 2 gallons of PRI-Ocide.”

By now, Sue was doing all of the talking. She had that fire in her eyes she sometimes gets when people really po’d her. She told him how much she’d pay for the PRI products and if he didn’t want to sell at that price, it was fine with her. The fella looked at Sue, looked at the M1911 she was wearing, took in the M1A slung over her shoulder and then... looked her in the eye.

“Yes Ma’am, whatever you say. \$20,000 will get you the tank, the #2 diesel and I’ll even throw in the first treatment with PRI-D, -Ocide and -Flow.”

I knew right then and there the fella was smarter than he looked. He got out a box and put in 2½-gallons of PRI-D, 1¼-gallons of PRI-Ocide and 2½-gallons of PRI-Flow. Sue was making little stacks with the money and she counted out 200 \$100 bills and asked him for a rubber band. She wrapped the bills with the band and asked when to expect him out at the place.

“Make it 2 hours, Ma’am.”

“Bring extra and you can top off our other tanks, at \$3.50, of course.”

“How much more will you need?”

“Not over 400 gallons. I’ll pay for whatever you pump.”

Right then and there, I knew we had a problem. I had enough PRI products, but we were getting down to measuring it by the fluid ounces. And the thing of it was, I wouldn’t know how much to add until he filled the tanks. I thought I was being smart connecting the tanks together like it did. Not! The generator wanted fuel and it didn’t care where it came from so it had pulled half from each. I knew that the 400 gallons was about right, maybe a little high. The main thing was to protect that new tank. It was a big sucker

painted faded barn red. It had 4 pairs of short legs holding it up and I'll bet I'd have to come up with some way to anchor those legs.

That Chevron guy must have figured Sue would hunt him down because they screwed in auger type anchors at every leg on that stand. I passed his man the jugs of PRI stuff and it got blended in as the tank was filled. When he finished there, he topped off the other two tanks and Mr. Chevron man went to talk to Sue.

“\$21,050, we added 300 gallons of fuel to your other tanks.”

“Can you break a hundred?”

“Yes Ma'am.”

She handed him the bundle of bills and told him to count them if he wanted. She peeled off 11 more of the hundreds and got back 2 20s and a 10. At .48gph, we were good for about 16,667 hours. I sure hoped the generator held out that long. When they had concluded the transaction, the missus says, “Thank ewe,” just like a southern belle. I half expected her to curtsy.

“What now, Sue? You planning on going down to Holloman and tell good old George how to run the country?”

“He run her right into the ground, Barry, don't get me started.”

“Yes dear.”

o

I didn't want to try and power the electrical panel with that 5kw backup generator, I don't do hot electrical panels. I got a measuring cup and added about 12 ounces of D and Flow and about 6 ounces of Ocide to each tank. 200-gallons was 1/10 of 2,000-gallons and a gallon held 128 fluid ounces. The exact measurements were 12.8 and 6.4, but it was close enough. Probably wouldn't mix in good anyway.

“Where did you get \$25,000 in cash?”

“I figured that we'd have a war and I ran into the bank and made a stink until the manager came up with \$25,000 in cash. Didn't figure anyone would take a check and half figured the ATMs would be down. I didn't want to get into that gold and silver coin until we absolutely had to.”

“We have any money left?”

“A few thousand is all. I’m glad the Chevron guy took cash and didn’t insist on gold. I know it’s still a while to Christmas, but I already got your presents. Considering the state of the world, I thought maybe you’d like to have them early.”

“What’s her name?”

“I got you several presents, Miss Winchester and the Colt twins.”

“Oh.”

“Oh? Oh!”

“Oh, oh.”

“Here. I hope you shoot yourself in the foot.”

“Since we’re having Christmas before Labor Day, I got you something too.”

“You did? What?”

“A Pfaff GrandQuilter with the Inspira Quilting Frame.”

“Oh, my...”

I most certainly didn’t tell her that I got it on sale. Full price ran about \$4,500 and I got it on one of those 20% off sales. I went to the basement to get the box with the sewing machine and Sue went into the bedroom to get something else. I sat down the sewing machine and told her I’d bring the quilting frame upstairs whenever she wanted. She handed me a holster rig. It was a black Laredoan Crossdraw - Model 1914-2, hand-tooled with Conchos. I think she came out ahead. Then she went back to the bedroom and brought out another box for me.

“I got you a Stetson hat, Barry. It’s an El Patron 30X, I couldn’t get the El Presidente. I hope you like it.” (What’s not to like about a \$600 hat?)

“Did you get me boots and some jeans?”

“Of course. Plus a belt and buckle, several shirts and socks.”

“What kind of boots? I understand they pinch your feet until they get them broken in.”

“Since you’re not a real cowboy, I got you some Laredo ankle zip boots. I sighted the Winchester in for 100 yards and I bought you 1,000 rounds of .45 Colt ammo. “

“I’m going to change into my new clothes and start getting used to wearing guns. Say, did you get yourself a Winchester and a pair of revolvers?”

The Asian Question – Chapter 9

“I got a Winchester, but I settled for a single Colt with a 5½” barrel. Between us, we have one of each size. I got myself the same holster as I got you, but only a single.”

“Did you get yourself some western style clothes too?”

“About the only woman who wore men’s clothes was Calamity Jane and I don’t like wearing long dresses. But yes, I got myself the same duds as I got you. Do you want to be Dale or Roy?”

“Oh, I suppose Roy would be fine, did you come up with Trigger and Bullet?”

“They stuffed and displayed in the Museum. In 2003, they moved from the museum from Victorville CA., to Branson, MO. You want a horse we can look for a Palomino for you and a Buckskin (Buttermilk) for me.”

“I’d be leery of making it known that we have money to buy horses, Sue. It’s one thing dealing with these business people but quite another if we start flashing cash.”

“We don’t have much cash left to flash. I told you, I got \$25k from the bank the day you went hunting the mast and the gun dealer was installing the fast attach mounts for those flashhiders. There wasn’t much left after that and I’d guess we burned most of it up with our other last minute purchases. I was just humoring you about the horses and to tell the truth, I rather not buy any. You’d have to build a shelter and corral and we’d have to buy hay and feed.”

“Oh good, maybe I can name the pickup Trigger.”

“Getting a good dog might not be a bad idea, but we should have done that a year ago. Honey, what we have now is probably what we’ve got and are going to get. We should probably lock the gate but that won’t keep out anyone determined to try and get at what we have.”

++++

I felt like asking her, “What now Sue?” I’ve had the lessons of a lifetime to know better than ask. Nice duds, but I’m too darned old to play Roy Rogers anymore. A pair of single action revolvers and a Winchester rifle only gives you 24 immediately available shots and the gun belt only holds 24 more rounds. I donned my ALICE gear and walked down and shut the gate. I took a padlock along, put the chain around the post and padlocked it shut. I could knock that gate down with my Dodge.

For the next couple of weeks, she and I restacked the firewood in the basement and hauled the dirt back upstairs. Then I dismantled that improvised shelter, being careful to save all of the wood. I stored the salvaged plywood and 4x4’s in the machine shed.

Can't really tell why we still call it that, we don't have any machines. The barn had been cleaned out when we'd bought the place and now it just smelled musty, dry or both.

My Social Security and pension were directly deposited to our checking account. I suppose if the bank were broke it would be a while before we saw that money, if ever. The long and short of that was that when we ran out of money, we were probably finished. On the other hand, we were rich if you counted those coins in Sue's cedar chest. I wasn't actually retired, I was disabled, but it's the same difference. I took my pension at 55 because the word was that a lot pension plans were in trouble. To top it off, I wasn't so disabled I couldn't putter. Don't think I'd have wanted to live if I was confined to a bed. Anyway, we had the basement back and that felt a lot better, I figured things were getting sort of back to normal. Didn't take any changes, though, wore the body armor and ALICE gear whenever I was out and about.

o

"We ought to go into town and see if Wally World is open, Barry."

"Do we need something?"

It couldn't hurt to get some extras, you know."

"Like what?"

"Coffee, pasta, flour, yeast and the basic sort of stuff."

"Do we have enough toilet paper for 2 years?"

"See, that's what I mean. We should inventory what we have, determine how much we're going to need and get the difference."

"I hope the tobacco shop is open, I'm down to my last 5 cigars."

"We do need to go shopping."

I cleaned the guy out of his Churchill rejects and topped it off with a box of good cigars. Wal-Mart was open, but they were limited to the stock on hand. We sort of squeaked by, substituting as required but getting everything on Sue's list. I noticed for the first time a military presence in Alamogordo and these guys weren't shopping. Saw 4 of those up-armored HMMWVs with .50 caliber machineguns; I guess you could say that they sort of had the town surrounded. I don't see why they were there – the city was quiet enough.

We took the stuff we bought home, that really eroded our supply of cash, and I piddled around most of the afternoon putting it away. The radio stations were finally back on and most of the news was local. I assumed the wire services were down so that meant

we couldn't really find out what was happening in the United States a half dozen weeks after the end of the world. They were running a small want ads section for about 15 minutes a day and Sue perked right up and listened closely. It was that sort of thing where they said what was for sale or wanted and gave a contact name.

"Hello the house!"

"What the heck? Sue, saddle up, we have company."

"I'll cover you. You go to the gate and see what they want."

I came boiling out of the house with my M1A at port arms only to see one of those HMMWVs at the front gate. His .50 caliber machinegun was a whole lot bigger than my M1A, so I slung my weapon and walked cautiously to the gate.

"What brings the Army here?"

"Census. Mind putting the rifle on the ground until we done talking?"

"Sergeant, that Ma Deuce of yours is bigger than my little .30 caliber rifle, but if it scares you, hold on while I shed it."

"How many people living here?"

"Two."

"Do you have identification?"

"Will my driver's license do?"

"That will be fine. Who else is here?"

"Just the wife. I'd expect that she has her M1A pointed right at your center mass."

"Ok, we have your information, what is your wife's name?"

"Susan."

"That jives with what we have. Lived here since 1998?"

"1999. Trick question?"

"Do you folks need anything?"

"It would be nice if you people told the radio station what was going on so we could find out."

“We were attacked by the Chinese.”

“Yeah I know and George Bush and all the public officials came to Holloman to hole up in that secret shelter.”

“How did you know that?”

“Someone saw the 747s come in. Why did you shoot down that private plane?”

“How did you know that?”

“I listened to it on my ham radio.”

“Several of the Chinese warheads got through. Our country lost about 20 metropolitan areas. We still don't have any estimate of the death toll, so I can't really tell you any more than that.”

“Sergeant how much longer before they have the lights back on and we have some real news?”

“It could be months, I don't really know. Can the two of you hold out that long?”

“Two years tops.”

“That's better than most. We'll have a patrol come by once a week and check on you. There are travel restrictions in place and if you planning on traveling out of the Alamogordo area, stop in town and get a travel pass.”

“Will we need a travel pass to drive up to Ruidoso Downs?”

“Yes. Why would you go there?”

“That's the other Wal-Mart store in the area.”

“That store is closed. What inventory they had that didn't get looted was moved down here to Alamogordo.”

“Sue was listening to the radio now that it's back on and got all excited over some darned ad. We need to get a travel permit to go anywhere in the Alamogordo area?”

“No sir. What was she looking for?”

“Horses.”

“Check the bulletin board they put up at the city hall. People selling and buying; all have cards posted.”

“Has there been any trouble in the area? Does one of us need to stay up nights and keep a watch?”

“You don’t have a dog?”

“Nope.”

“It might be a good idea to find one. No trouble so far, but the stores are starting to run out of food. There is no telling when we’re going to have trouble in this area. We put 4 patrols in Alamogordo and have a few more out running this census. If you have a good ham radio, we can get a tech out here to make a simple modification to allow you to transmit on VHF and UHF Guard frequencies.”

“Send him, I can listen, but can’t transmit. Those are 121.5 and 243, right?”

“Right. Ok, someone will be by during the following week. Then, if you have an emergency, you can get on the Air Guard frequencies and call for help.”

o

“What was that about?”

“Census, or so he claimed. He seemed to already know who was supposed to be living here. Let’s see if I can remember everything. There are travel restrictions in place and we need to go to Alamogordo to get a travel pass to leave the area. The Wal-Mart store in Ruidoso Downs got looted and what was left was brought down here. There is a bulletin board at city hall where people post wanted and for sale items. The Chinese hit 20 metropolitan areas. Oh, they’re sending by an electronic technician to modify our Kenwood radio so we can transmit on the VHF and UHF Guard frequencies.”

“Anything else?”

“Uh, they’ll be by about once a week with a patrol. He said they were starting to run low on food in Alamogordo and once they ran out, he couldn’t say what would happen. Told me that we should get a dog.”

“Fine, saddle up and let’s go check that bulletin board.”

“What do we want?”

“For starters a dog. Then we should consider getting a couple of horses and hay to feed them. We can use the manure on the garden come spring. Did you ask him when the phone would be back up?”

“Nope.”

“We’ll need a rototiller to mix in the manure and break up the soil for planting.”

“Maybe we can get another barrel of gas.”

“And some PRI-G.”

“When we get back, I have a project for you Barry. Stack all of that firewood from that pile on the front porch.”

“Why would I want to do that?”

“Bullet stop.”

“I’m sorry I asked”

◦

Long story short, Sue bought 2 brown horses that were pregnant and a truckload of hay. We found a 9-month-old German Shepherd we got for ½ ounce of gold. We went by the Chevron place and got a 55-gallon drum of 87 octane and some PRI-G. The dog’s name was Rex and he was house trained and partially guard trained. Ended up with a new rototiller that wasn’t very big. I sort of guessed it would take a couple of days to rototill the garden. Sue suggested that I do it now so it would be easier in the spring to rototill in the manure. That was like riding an unbroken horse until I got the hang of it.

Frankly, I couldn’t see wearing the ALICE gear while I was rototilling and I took off the cross draw holster and just wore the 7½” Colt. I bet that 100 years ago you didn’t have to wear a gun just to rototill your garden. Wait, they didn’t have rototillers 100 years ago, did they? You know what I mean. Anyway, I was right, it took me 2 days to get the garden plot the way I wanted it and rake it smooth.

I picked up a wheelbarrow I used to haul the manure from the barn to the garden where I sort of spread it around. Sue picked up 2 good used saddles with saddlebags and stopped in Alamogordo and bought rifle scabbards. I think she is carrying this Roy Rogers bit too far, but I’m not going to be the one to tell her. The good news is you can’t ride a pregnant horse. The bad news is that we’re going to have more mouths to feed. We picked up 250 pounds of dog chow at Wally World. That was about all they had left. It’s just a good thing we don’t take a bunch of pills, can you imagine trying to stock up a 2-year supply of prescriptions?

I was sort of getting into a routine. I start out by stoking the furnace with coal, then use the bathroom and clean up. After, I’d eat breakfast, usually pancakes, and then feed the

horses. After lunch, I'd muck out the stalls and haul the manure to the garden and spread it out. Then it was back to the house to stoke the furnace again.

"How come we don't have bacon and eggs for breakfast once in a while?"

"I fixed bacon."

"You never fix eggs."

"You wanted some powdered eggs, fine, I'll fix them. I didn't see any chickens listed on the bulletin board or we could have bought some."

"Have you tried the powdered eggs, Sue?"

"You know I have, that's why I'm not feeding them to you. You'd just have something else to complain about. I have some eggbeaters in the freezer. If you really want eggs, I'll out get out a box. Or, if you'd prefer, I could fix powdered eggs and doctor them up."

"How?"

"Ortega chilies and bacon bits."

"Hmm, that sounds good. Got some cheese you could grate on the top?"

"I can manage that. We're having cowboy beans for supper."

"What are cowboy beans?"

"Pinto beans doctored up with onion, garlic and diced chilies."

"How come you always fix tuna salad for lunch?"

"I can fix Spam or chicken salad if you'd prefer. Why don't you sit down and make up a menu and I'll see what I can do to accommodate your choices? If you want something different for lunch, you can bring it up in the morning after you've stoked the furnace. You just leave it up to me and then complain if I can't read your mind."

It was time for a Bud! One of these days I'm going to learn to just keep my mouth shut. If it wasn't for her and the way her father raised her, we'd be a whole lot worse off, I can tell you that. Anyway, I wanted to do something so I could keep an eye on the place and stay inside at the same time. I looked over the upstairs front bedroom and decided it would make a good observation post. I moved my table from the basement to right in front of the upstairs bedroom window and set my radio equipment up on one side of the table and my computer screen on the other. Then I dragged the creaky old office chair upstairs and oiled it until it quit squeaking. I also dragged the spare TV in there along with an AM/FM radio. TV hadn't come back on yet, but I put together a nice little CIC. I

spent the next day or so dinking around until I had a rack for my firearms. There was my M1A, the 11-87, the Winchester .45 Colt and the Ruger 10/22.

I'll have to tell you, it's amazing how small your world becomes when the country has been through a nuclear war and there are travel restrictions in place. On top of that, the stores were getting pretty empty. I marked up a calendar to remind me when to service the 12kw generator, once every 8 days, snow or shine. We had to go into town and buy some of the empty 55-gallon drums so I had a place to store the used oil. A case of oil is 6 gallons and I had 24 cases or 144 gallons. And, that didn't include the oil for the Dodge or the rototiller. I finally figured out which breakers the 2 refrigerators and the freezer were on and wired up a circuit that I could connect to the portable. Managed to do it without electrocuting myself too.

I tried that menu thing Sue mentioned but it only took me about 10 minutes to run out of ideas. The Army guy came by and worked on my radio for about 1 minute. From now on it could transmit on all of the frequencies it could receive. I programmed the memory so I had the two Guard channels on channels 41 and 42. I also programmed channels 1 to 40 for the CB frequencies. I can't really tell you what the soldier did to the radio, melted something, I think. Anyway, it removed all the built in blocks.

I thought I could listen to the military communications, but I was wrong. They used those SINCGARS radio sets and they were encrypted somehow. I had a copy of Army FM6-02-72 on my computer, but that didn't help a lot. It did help me to understand why I couldn't talk to the military except on Guard. According to the Field Manual, they weren't supposed to use their radios in SC (Single Channel) mode and these guys apparently followed orders.

There are many things that I am and there are many things that I am not. I am a man with 4 years of army experience about 30 years ago. I remember enough of my training to know to take cover and not expose myself to enemy fire. I figured out how to run the rototiller and if that makes me a farmer, then I'm a farmer; otherwise, I guess I'm a gardener. We have 2 pregnant mares but I don't ride and I've never raised horses. I can shovel coal and manure and I did manage to cobble together a suitable shelter in the basement to get us through the hard part. Even though I have a ham radio, I don't have a license so I guess that means I'm not a ham, as in amateur radio operator.

The Asian Question – Chapter 10

My wife Sue is the survivalist in the family and I mostly do what she tells me to do in any given situation. She has this clever way of letting me think I'm in charge, but I know the truth. Sometimes I get really po'd with Sue, so I slink down to the basement and get a Bud and get over it. She seemed to think that my setting up that Op Center in the upstairs front bedroom was a good idea, so maybe it was. I asked her what all the conversation with the guy who put up the mast was about and she said he taught her how to

repair the coax if it got broken. She showed me and it was pretty complicated unless you knew how.

I may be repeating myself, but let me tell you about Tamiflu. Tamiflu works to stop the spread of flu virus in the body. Tamiflu is a neuraminidase (noor-uh-MIN-ih-dase) inhibitor. These inhibitors treat the cause of influenza infection by inhibiting the critical neuraminidase protein on the surface of the virus. They have the same effect on all other neuraminidase proteins and that may explain the 12 deaths in Japan associated with Tamiflu. In Japan, Tamiflu is prescribed to children 10-12 times more as it is prescribed in the US. Tamiflu (TAM-ih-flew) is a medicine to treat flu (infection caused by influenza virus). It belongs to a group of medicines called neuraminidase inhibitors. These medications attack the influenza virus and prevent it from spreading inside your body.

Tamiflu treats flu at its source by attacking the virus that causes the flu, rather than simply masking symptoms. Each Tamiflu capsule (grey/light yellow) contains 75 mg of active drug and should be taken by mouth.

Tamiflu is generally well tolerated. Tamiflu may cause mild-to-moderate nausea or vomiting in one out of 10 people. Taking Tamiflu with food may reduce the potential for these side effects. Other less common side effects may include bronchitis, sleeplessness and vertigo.

Tamiflu is authorized by the FDA for children ages 1 and up but not as a prophylactic treatment. It is available in a syrup form and administered to young children at the rate of 1mg/kg of body weight. (One teaspoon = ~5mL) The properly reconstituted solution contains 12mg/mL and one course of treatment costs ~\$50 regardless of the form the drug is in.

Remember, I'm not a doctor and can only tell you what I read. As nearly as I can tell, the product has an excellent shelf life in powder form. The pharmacist reconstitutes the suspension by adding 23mL of pure (sterile?) water to the contents of the suspension bottle and shakes the bottle strongly for at least 15 seconds. It is very high on my list of meds to acquire and keep for future use. Unfortunately it requires a prescription and with a family of 5 (3 adults & 2 children), you're looking at spending \$250 in the blink of an eye. As I understand the standard course of treatment, you take it BID for 5 days. The outcome is that it reduces you flu term by about 30 percent and seems to work against H5N1.

++++

I was sitting in the OP reading an old copy of Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell (Operation Baracuda) when I noticed a pickup pull up at the gate and stop.

"Sue, are we expecting anyone?"

"Not that I know of, why?"

“There’s a pickup parked at the gate. I’ll suit up and you can cover my six from the OP. You have your scope and it might be a good idea to attach the flashhider. I’ll go see what they want.”

“They?”

“Driver and one passenger I could see.”

I put on my The Storm vest and the ALICE gear over it. I covered the gear with a slicker, no sense in advertising. I chambered a round in the M1A, checked my .45 and did the same and off I went. I could now see there were 3 fellas and I keyed up the FRS radio and told Sue there were 3 men, not 2. She replied with 2 clicks and I kept going. Did I mention that we added the Ballistic facemasks to our Kraut helmets? Sorry. As I approached the passenger next to the door rolled down the window.

“Help you fellas?”

“Got any food you can spare?”

“Actually no, we are short on rations as it is.”

“How many of you are there?”

“Five. Sue, me, Rex, Salina and Juanita.” (The dog and 2 horses) “Sorry.”

“Thanks anyway.”

I turned and headed back to the house. The next thing I heard was the supersonic crack of a bullet as it went past me. I decided a belly landing was in order. It wasn’t 3 seconds before a second crack rang out. By this time I’d manage to roll behind a bush, which offered concealment but damned little cover. I brought my M1A around and plugged the guy in the middle who was doing his very best to get out of that pickup. Sue came running and I managed to croak out, “What the hell was that about?”

“The passenger leveled a gun on your back and I took him out. I couldn’t see the guy in the middle so my second shot got the driver. I put out a Mayday on channel 42 and told the guy where we were. He said a patrol would be here in 10 minutes.”

“Ten minutes? It’s all over except making sure they’re dead. I check them and get their weapons.”

“Nice a HK91, select fire 7.62x51mm; a MP-5; and a what, maybe an M-40?”

“The back of their pickup is full of stuff.”

“Let it sit. The Army will tell what we can have.”

Ten minutes turned to fifteen minutes to twenty minutes. Finally one of those M1114 Hummers pulled up.

“What happened here?”

“They asked for food and I told them that we on the short side. I turned to return to the house and Sue says the guy on the right brought up that MP5. She plugged him good and then shot the driver. I got the guy in the middle. The back of that pickup is filled to overflowing; it appears that they might have been out salvaging.”

“Where are their weapons?”

“Over there in a pile along with the extra magazines. We didn’t touch anything else, in case you’re wondering.”

“Secure those weapons and check the guy over. Someone look in the back of that pickup. I’m afraid I’ll have to ask you for your weapons.”

“You can ask, but you have to kill us to get them.”

“Fine. Safe the weapons, pull the mags and clear the chambers.”

“That’s better. There, done,” I said returning the round from the chamber to the magazine that I slipped into my waistband.

“Clear here,” Sue announced.

“Hey Sergeant, the back of the pickup is full of loot. There are several firearms, ammo, food, jewelry and a box with men’s and ladies wallets.”

“Is that a suppressor on your wife’s rifle?”

“Darn right it is.”

“Do you have one too?”

“In my fanny pack I do. We did all of the paperwork, you know.”

“I’m going to take your word on that mister. Do you recognize any of the stuff in the back of the pickup?”

“I’ll look.”

“I don’t see anything I recognize, how about you, honey?”

“That painting was hanging in the living room at the next place down the road. I don’t see anything else if recognize.”

“The men are all dead Sergeant Collins.”

“What do you think Sergeant?”

“Offhand, I say you killed 3 guys engaged in organized looting.”

“What about their weapons?”

“Evidence.”

“Bull, they’re dead, there isn’t going to be a trial. I liked to keep their weapons, magazines and ammo.”

“What about the food?”

“Sergeant you’re going to have track down where they got it. If they left anyone alive return it, we have enough. I sure would like to have those weapons though.”

“I’ll tell you what. We take them with us and if we can’t come up with the owners, I bring them back here, fair enough?”

“Seems fair enough, yes.”

“Ok, here’s the deal, we’ll have to get statements on tape and we’ll get those transcribed and bring them back for the two of you to sign. If all of the people are dead, what do you want us to do with their things?”

“Give the food to people in Alamogordo who are short on food.”

“What about any money we find?”

“Blood money, donate it too. Like I said, all I want are the weapons, magazines and any ammo.”

The soldiers took our statements, separately of course, put the bodies in the back of the pickup and returned the way the pickup came. It was probably 2 weeks later, not all that long before Christmas, when the Sergeant turned up one day. He had the weapons including the ones we hadn’t seen. 3 Browning Hi-Powers with the 13-shot magazines, the MP-5, the M-40 and the HK91. There were 7 magazines each for the submachine gun, about 9 for the HK91 and a total of 9 Browning magazines. He also had the partial cases of 9mm and 7.62x51mm.

"I took the liberty of bringing you one case of M118LR for the M-40 and a case of M80 ball for the HK. I also scrounged a case of 9mm M882 ball. There weren't any military markings on the weapons so I suppose you might as well have them."

"Would you and your driver care for a Bud?"

"Like one, yes. Take one, no. Rain check?"

"Any time Sergeant."

o

"He bought you the guns? How did you manage that?"

"I asked. He even brought us the precision M118LR ammo for the M-40, 2,000 rounds of 9mm and 1,000 rounds of M80 ball. You know, we probably did them a favor taking out those 3 men in that pickup. This could have been his way of saying thanks."

"I'm glad for the guns, but I don't like it. Word's going to get around that we have something worth taking and that we're more than ready to protect whatever it is."

"Sue that's why we got Rex. We should get some warning if someone shows up. I think a dog's sense of hearing is about like their sense of smell, several times better than ours. You're a better shot than I am, do you want to take the M-40 with the MP-5 for a backup?"

"What does it have for a scope?"

"Leopold Mk 4. I didn't check that close but I believe it's variable power."

"That's a snipers weapon. I'll run it into Alamogordo and have the guy move the flash-hider from my M1A to that rifle."

"Why don't you just have him install the adapter, Sue? If you do that, you can use it on both rifles."

"Good idea. They can machine a mount right into the barrel or thread it for one of the other fast adapters. We're out of cash, so I'll have to pay him in gold."

"You want me to ride along?"

"I'll be ok, you stay here and keep an eye on the place. I take Rex with me."

"I'll clean the HK91 and get it ready to go. Check and see if he has any more of the magazines, would you? And if you think we could use more ammo, buy it."

The Asian Question – Chapter 11

Sue didn't get back until near dark. I didn't like that but she must have been in the store because I couldn't get her on the radio. The gunsmith had threaded the barrel and installed a Fast Attach adapter on the M-40. After breakfast the next day, Sue took the M-40 and some of the M118LR ammo out and got the rifle sighted in. The scope turned out to be one that automatically compensated for the M118LR ammo so it didn't really take her all that long. The rifle ended up in the rack in my OP. The HK91 was in excellent condition and after I figured how to disassemble it, I cleaned it good, used an approved lube and got it reassembled. Sue picked up 10 more magazines and a single case of the Lake City 7.62 overruns. I loaded 9 magazines and had them stacked, ready to switch out with the M1A magazines. I guess I should have asked her to pick up another ALICE rig, but the thought never crossed my mind.

"Here you go."

"What did you get?"

"Open the bag and look."

"ALICE gear? Darn, I did good when I married you. I was just thinking that I should have asked you to get me a second set."

"When I saw the HK magazines, it occurred to me that you have to switch them around and knowing you, I figured I'd better eliminate the confusion. Get some tape and label the rigs, 'M1A' and 'HK'. While I was at it, I got you a couple of other things. Here's a second KA-BAR knife for the second set of ALICE gear and here's a knife to wear with your cowboy rig."

"Looks more like a machete, what the heck is it?"

"Look at the box stupid, it's Rambo III."

"I can see what I'm going to be doing for the rest of my life. The edge is sharp but the top needs some work. Thanks honey. Did you get me the auxiliary wheels to carry the thing?" (2¾ pounds)

"Where are you going?"

"To get a file from my toolbox, the top edge really needs a lot of work."

"I thought you'd like it, Barry. It weighs about the same as your Colt and you'll be better balanced."

"I love it, Sue. I'll be able to sharpen knives for the rest of my life."

I did like the knife, but it was pretty heavy for a middle-aged man. I did the KA-BAR first, that was easy. Then I turned my attention to Rambo III. What I needed was an adjustable vise to hold it at just the right angle. I could have cut away the extra metal in nothing flat. Didn't have one so I did it the hard way. That 420-J2 steel is pretty darned hard. In between meals and doing all of my chores, I worked on it. Sue made me close the door to the OP; my language was getting to her.

After my stint in the Army, I always figured if you got close enough to use a bayonet or knife, you were too darned close. When I was in, we used the M16A1 rifle. After I got out, they went to the M16A2 in 1983. I didn't care for the M16; it was far too fragile to be an infantry weapon. And unlike the rifles used by some of the other military organizations around the world, it required far too much attention. It was fussier than a baby with a dirty diaper when it got dirty.

++++

"Come spring, we'll get some chickens."

"Oh good, more fertilizer for the garden."

"When they get to be fryer size, I thought we could butcher some and add them to the freezer. If you ever get your new toy sharp, it should be handy for cutting off their heads."

"One more day of filing and I'll be ready to use the stone."

"There was a note on the bulletin board that someone had some old laying hens for sale. I suppose they quit laying and he's selling them for meat. Would you like for me to see about getting some? A baked chicken would be a nice break in our routine."

"I'd like that, Sue."

"We'll see if you're still singing the same tune when you get to pluck them."

"I just can't wait until I have more manure to haul."

"Sarcasm? It doesn't become you."

"Sarcasm is an art form, Sue. Irony refers to the literal meaning and the intended meaning of the words uttered being different, while sarcasm refers to the mocking intent of the utterance. It is possible to be ironic without being sarcastic, and to be sarcastic without being ironic. Sarcasm is also regularly confused with cynicism, which in common use is seen as a fundamental nihilistic attitude toward other people and life in general, whereas sarcasm can also be used to express positive ideas or sentiments. Because it is vocally-oriented, sarcasm can be difficult to grasp in written form and is easily misinterpreted."

“I’m sorry I said anything.”

“You should be I think I’ll go get a Bud.”

“Come off it Barry, this isn’t a Bud moment. Save the beer for when we’re done plucking chickens, you may need it.”

She took off and about 2 hours later brought a dozen big hens home. While she was gone, I’d hit the big bottom blade of my Rambo knife and it really sharp. I’d driven 2 nails in a stump and could kill the chickens myself, catching their heads between the nails and giving a whack with Rambo. The first one quit flopping about the time I lopped the head off the 12th. Sue had a big kettle of boiling water so we scalded the chickens and started plucking. Yuck, smelly business and I had feathers everywhere. Sue told me to go get a Bud and she’d singe the chickens, gut them and freeze them. I got a shower first; oh man I really stunk.

o

We hadn’t been in bed for more than an hour when Rex started acting up. Sue stuck an elbow in my rib hard enough to wake the dead.

“What?”

“Shh, Rex is acting up. Slip some clothes on and get to the OP. I’ll finish dressing and join you. Radio the Army on Guard and tell them we have an emergency.”

“What? We haven’t even looked out the window yet.”

“Look at Rex; I’ve never seen him so upset. Do it and if I’m wrong, I’ll take the heat.”

I slid into my clothes and stumbled to the OP. I couldn’t see the knob on the radio and turned on my mini-mag light so I could change the radio to Channel 41 or 42. Crack! Ping! The window shattered and I realized that Sue was right as the flashlight fell to the floor.

“Mayday, mayday. This is the Ryan Ranch. We have intruders and are taking fire.”

“This channel is reserved for emergencies. State the nature of your emergency or clear the channel.”

“This is the Ryan Ranch. We have intruders and are under fire. We’re on US 54 just north and east of Tularosa. You’d better hurry and bring machineguns.”

“Roger, Ryan Ranch, we’ll notify the Army.”

“Who am I talking to?”

Crack! Ping!

“Ryan Ranch, this is Holloman AFB. Is that gunfire?”

“It ain’t the 4th of July. Affirmative.”

“Can you hold until the Army arrives?”

“If we’re dead when they get here it means we couldn’t. How in hell do I know? Ryan Ranch clear.”

“I sure wish we had a yard light.”

“We have a yard light, they must have shot it out. Do you see them?”

“I don’t see anything. What now?”

“Do you know the term recon by fire?”

“We shoot and they shoot back? Then we shoot at their muzzle flashes?”

“Are you glad I bought really good flashhiders?”

“Oh, yeah, I forgot.”

“Use the HK91 and draw their fire. I’ll use the M-40 and you can switch to your M1A.”

“Ryan Ranch, this is Sergeant Collins on VHF Guard channel, do you copy?”

“Sergeant, this is Sue. We were just going to do a recon by fire.”

“Negative, we’re two minutes out. Standby.”

“I hear them coming Sue,” I advised.

The next thing we knew, 2 HMMWVs showed up and their M2HBs were doing all of their talking. Man, was that a one sided conversation. We started to turn on lights and headed downstairs. Sue put on a pot of coffee for the soldiers.

“Hello the house.”

“Sgt. Collins, good to see you. Sue’s making coffee. Man did you pull our chestnuts out of the fire.”

“I’d have been by later today to talk to you anyway. We were in the area, I was worried.”

“About what?”

“There’s talk in town that you folks bought 2 horses and paid gold. That Chevron dealer said you bought 5,000-gallons of diesel and paid cash. Some folks are speculating that you folks have mucho money out here. Fortunately most of them don’t know where you live.”

“Tell your soldiers to come in and get coffee, Sgt. Collins. We’d better talk about this, we’re not rich and we used up most of our cash on the diesel fuel.”

Sue explained that she’d invested some of the money from selling our house in California in a small quantity of gold and silver a few years ago. She also explained that she was thrifty and we had some money in the bank and that she pulled most of it just before TSHTF. Then she started talking about how her father was a preparedness freak and a little of it rubbed off on her.

“I guess that explains most of it, Mrs. Ryan, but it doesn’t do anything for the perception around parts of town that you folks have a huge stash of money and gold. I see you figured out the Air Guard frequencies. That controller at Holloman wasn’t the happiest camper I’ve ever seen.”

“Sgt. Collins, why don’t you give us a SINCGARS to use?” I asked.

“What do you know about SINCGARS?”

“I’ve read Army FM 06-02-72. I have it in a pdf file on my computer. As I recall, the Army bought a lot of those radios during Iraqi Freedom. They were ICOMs, weren’t they?”

“How did you...?”

“I got the field manual off Global Security. I try my best to keep up on things.”

“So, you don’t have large amounts of gold and silver or large amounts of cash?”

“We have some gold and silver but almost no cash left. We got the dog like you suggested. What else can we do?”

The Asian Question – Chapter 12

“I’ll talk to my Company Commander about getting you a SINCGARS, but don’t count on it. I can try and get the word out that you folks spent what little money you had. I don’t think it will do a lot of good, but I’ll try.”

One of the soldiers got some plywood from the machine shed and covered the shot out window. I knew that I was going to have to drive into town first thing in the morning and get the glass in the window and the storm window replaced. At least I could stand on the roof to work on the windows. Maybe I should get one of those sheets of GuardVue glass-clad polycarbonate and replace the entire storm window. It came in sheets as big as 48”x84” and probably cost a small fortune.

Sgt. Collins had told us what he could do, not a whole lot, but I was hoping he could talk his Captain into letting us use one of those military radios. I was so wound up I couldn’t sleep so when Sue finally went back to bed, I went to the OP to listen to the ham bands. I listened for a while on 75 meters then moved to 20 meters. Some of these guys must stay up all night to talk on their radios.

After daylight, I took down the plywood and pulled the storm window. I couldn’t get the regular window out of the frame. Once I had the storm window out, I put the plywood back up and headed to town. Sue kept Rex and told me she’d keep an eye on the place. I could see that the business people were trying to carry on business as usual, but they didn’t seem to have many customers. I went to the glass shop and told him I had a window at home that was shot out that I couldn’t get out of the casing. He told me he could come by, replace it and wanted to know if I wanted the glass replaced in the storm window. I told him to go ahead and asked about the bulletproof glass.

“What did you have in mind?”

“Replacing the entire storm window with a sheet of GuardVue or something similar.”

“Let me see what I have in stock. The whole window?”

“I can’t see any other way to do it.”

“It’s not exactly inexpensive.”

“My wife has a little money, she can handle it. Here’s where we live, you can bring the storm window, the bulletproof glass and stuff to replace the regular window. When can you come by?”

“3:00?”

“We’ll be there.”

++++

"Where's the window?"

"He'll be by around 3 to repair the window and either install the storm window or a sheet of bulletproof glass."

"If you put bulletproof glass in that window, we won't be able to shoot out!"

"I'm more concerned about them shooting in, Sue."

"The Vet's here."

"Rex sick?"

"The one of the mares is foaling."

"What's the deal? Does he have a crystal ball to know when someone's horse is going to have a baby? The phones are out and we only have one vehicle, which I had in Alamogordo."

"He said that he had it in his appointment book to check on the mares. It just so happened that one of them was ready to foal."

"I saw her lying down; I just thought she was tired. Should I boil water or something?"

"The Vet has it under control. Why didn't you tell me the mare was down?"

"She'd lay down for a minute then get back up and pace. How was I supposed to know?"

"Well folks, you've got a filly."

"Stick with me Rex; we're getting out numbered here."

"What about the other Mare?"

"I'll come back tomorrow morning. Didn't you folks realize that she was about to foal?"

"What are the symptoms?"

"Restlessness, pawing or nest building, frequent loose bowel movements, frequent urination, lying down and standing up and yawning."

"Fine, but the phones are out, how would we contact you?"

"I've been monitoring channel 9 on the CB radio. What's with the plywood, break a window?"

"About 11pm, Rex woke Sue up. I headed to that room to get on the radio and call the Army. When I turned on my mini-mag light, they started shooting at the window."

"What was that all about?"

"Someone started a rumor that we had gold, silver and cash. We don't but apparently whoever it was last night believed the rumor."

"How did it turn out?"

"We're here aren't we? The Army shot the guys with those .50 caliber machine guns or something."

"Your dog had all of his shots?"

"He's just a year old, is he due for some?"

"I'll give him a 7 in 1."

"What about rabies?"

"Once every 3 years. If you got him from a breeder, I'd assume he already had one."

"If he gets one too soon will it hurt anything?"

"No, why?"

"Give him everything. What about shots for the horses?"

"I'll set up a schedule and come by when they're needed."

o

"Did you have a sheet of bulletproof glass?"

"It's a glass over polycarbonate. And, yes, I had a sheet leftover from a job I did for \$55 per square foot. The window will run you \$825. Let me replace the panes in the window upstairs and I'll install it, if you wish."

"Will you accept payment in gold and silver?"

"I guess. Do you have the exchange rates?"

“\$1,300 per ounce on gold and \$17.50 an ounce on silver.”

“Ok. The windows are \$35 per pane. You have 4 panes plus the polycarbonate. Your total is \$1,034.95”

“¾ ounce of gold and 3 ounces of silver and the rest in cash ok with you?”

“I suppose. You aren’t the only people who have gold and silver. But, it’s mostly the older folks who have some. The kids these days seem to believe that plastic is the answer to everything. Did you hear about the farmer’s market they’ve set up in Alamogordo?”

“No, what do they have for sale?”

“A little bit of everything. Not a lot of food, though. Real brisk trade in firearms.”

“What I’d really like to have is one of those Ma Deuces,” I pointed out.

“Oh, there was a guy there with one of those. His price was 12 ounces of gold for the machinegun, tripod and 2,000 rounds of standard military 4 to 1 mix.”

“Ball and tracer?”

“AP and APIT.”

“Sue?”

“I’ll get you 12 ounces of gold. Maybe we can get more ammo from that nice Sgt. Collins.”

She gave me 12 of the Gold Eagles and I headed to town. Lots of people were talking to the guy with the machinegun, but nobody was buying.

“I understand you’re asking 12 ounces of gold for the machinegun, tripod and 2,000 rounds of AP/APIT.”

“That’s right, but nobody seems to have that much gold.”

“I do.”

“Show me.”

“12 gold Eagles.”

“You have a truck? I’ll help you load it.”

“Know where I can get more ammo?”

“That’s all I had. Ask the Army, they have plenty.”

“I’m home!”

“Did you buy it?”

“Oh yeah, we’re ready for the bad guys when they come back.”

“Where are you going to put it?”

“I’m going to take those sandbags I got from the Fire Department and fill them with that loose soil we brought up from the basement. I think we should put it right in front of the house or on the front porch.”

“We’ll put it at the side of the house, Barry. If you put in front of the house, our home will be shot full of holes. If you have enough sandbags, you can put in a row from the back porch to the fighting position.”

“Did he get the window done?”

“Yes, you can sit and watch the road again and not worry about anything up to and including .50 caliber armor piercing ammo.”

“Give me a hand with the machinegun, Sue. Man, I’m tired, I stayed up all night.”

“We can set it in the living room by the window and you can fill the sandbags tomorrow. Before he left, Doc said to check the other mare every hour and let him know when she was ready to foal.”

“I thought he was coming by this morning.”

“He called me on channel 9 and said he got tied up with another delivery.”

“Have you heard from the Army about the SINCGARS?”

“No.”

o

“We need to replace the yard light, Barry. They destroyed the fixture when they shot it out.”

“What I ought to do is run a string of floodlights all around the house on the edge of the roof. I go into Alamogordo tomorrow and see if I can find some simple fixtures.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 13

Since our horse was ready to foal, I stayed up until midnight checking on her and Sue took over after. I slept late the following morning, trying to get back some of the sleep I'd lost. I was in the middle of an audacious dream when I heard a door slam. I staggered out of bed, hit the can and looked out the new bulletproof window. I saw the Vet's H2 Hummer, so we must be having a baby. I took a quick shower and got dressed. I purely hate to shave and only do that on Saturday nights.

"Are we having a baby?"

"She's about ready to foal."

"Let me grab a cup of coffee and I'll go into town to see about a sodium yard light and a string of something I can run around the eaves of the house."

"Why don't you just find an electrician? You don't like to climb ladders anyway."

"Can we afford that?"

"Yes. But, I thought maybe I'd set up a table at the farmer's market once a week and sell my quilts."

"What are they worth?"

"Depending on size, anywhere from \$500 to \$1,500, each."

"How many do you have?"

"I average about 4 a year and I've been making them ever since we moved here, so I'd guess around 36."

"I go check with the Vet and drive into Alamogordo and arrange for an electrician."

I'd climbed a ladder to paint all of the buildings, but I didn't like it one bit. It was tough enough hanging on with one hand and slapping on paint with the other. I had no idea how I was going to install the light fixtures, to tell the truth. I fell out of a tree when I was a kid, broke my arm and darn near killed myself. Been afraid of heights ever since. Thirty-six quilts with an average price of \$1,000 would buy a whole lot of light bulbs. My experience with electricians was that if it was simple, like installing a \$30 fixture, the labor was about the same amount as the price of the fixture. Didn't matter, Sue was paying.

++++

Wait a minute; Sue is paying with our money, right? I'd better buy some economical fixtures and pay an electrician to install them. I bought 24 fixtures, six per side. I figured

the electrician would have an appropriate switch and the wire. I also got a new sodium fixture for him to install on our yard light. It was one of the kind that automatically turns itself on and off. I bought what the store recommended, their top seller. The bulbs had a 5,000-hour life; or less if someone shot them out.

The electrician wired all of the fixtures together in parallel and put in a toggle switch box. I asked why and he said that 24 250w fixtures would pull 50 amps. I hadn't thought about that, the generator would get quite a workout when I flipped that switch. He also said it would light the entire property up like daylight. The mare had a filly, by the way. I planned to stay up until about 10pm and flip that switch to see if it really did light up the entire homestead.

What with putting up the lights, I didn't get any sandbags filled because I was too busy supervising. I think he charged extra because I watched. You've seen those signs, right? *Our labor rates are \$20 per hour, \$30 per hour if you watch and \$40 per hour if you supervise.* I just watched and marveled how he could work at the top of that extension ladder and not hang on. I didn't say a single word to him the entire time. Around 10pm, I went outside and shouted to Sue to flip the switch. You couldn't even see the house for all of the lights. Wow!

o

I'd been putting off cleanout the birthing stall because it was a mess. Got a good bunch of manure and soiled bedding to work into the soil. We ought to get a bumper crop this year. Sue had 4 king size – \$1,500, 10 queen size – \$1,250, 12 full size – \$1,000, 8 twin size – \$750 and 2 baby size – \$500 quilts. If she sold them all, she'd have herself a tidy little sum. She hand lettered a sign with the prices and indicated cash, silver or gold, barter considered. She said she wanted to set up a table on Fridays.

When I had been in Alamogordo checking on an electrician and buying the light fixtures, I'd checked on the farmer's market. They rented spaces with or without a table, but the table was only \$5 more so I suggested she just rent a space with a table. She had a lot of foot traffic but only sold 2 quilts. It appeared that few people actually had much cash, gold or silver. I went along and wore my Laredo rig with the Rambo III knife that I'd finally managed to get sharp all around. The guy who sold me the Ma Deuce was there and he had another one. Same price, too. I wondered if maybe he was some soldier who worked in supply or something. I asked him about more ammo but he said all he had was the 2,000-rounds of AP/APIT that he was selling with the gun. That's what he'd told me when I bought the one I have. He did have spare barrels and I asked him how much. \$1,000 each, can you believe that? I bought 2 giving me a total of 4.

Around 5:00, they started to close up so we took the remaining 34 quilts and my new machinegun barrels out to the truck. He tossed in one of those head spacing gauges. It's a little piece of chain with go/no go gauges on one end and a little bar on the other. I'll have to study my copy of FM 23-65 to make sure I know how to set the headspace and timing. After that, I think it might be a good idea to check my Ma Deuce to make

darn sure it's ready to go. Sure wish that we would hear something from Sgt. Collins about that SINCGARS radio.

o

Saturday morning we filled sandbags. I had decided that with all of the floodlights, it didn't make good sense to have an outside firing position so we sandbagged the front of our house. I had a lot of sandbags and we put in one layer by Saturday night. The following morning we started in again and filled enough for a second layer of sandbags all the way from the porch floor to the lid. I'll have to give her credit – Sue is a real trooper. She shoveled and I tied the sandbags off and stacked them.

“What's for supper?”

“There's a roast in the crock pot with potatoes and carrots.”

“Where did you get carrots?”

“Out of the freezer. There's a list of what is in the freezer on that clipboard lying on top.”

“I'll have to check the calendar; I think that the generator is due for an oil change.”

“How is our supply of fuel holding up?”

“We're in great shape, I think that we only use about .6 of a gallon per hour on average. Man did you hear that generator lug down when we tested the lights? We wouldn't want to turn those on unless we had a problem.”

“I want to see them so tonight around 10pm, I'll go outside and you flip the switch.”

“Ok. I'll turn off all the lights in the house like it would be in an emergency situation like we had last time. What size quilts did you sell?”

“Two of the queen size. If you're going along to be with me, that's one thing, but if it's going to be an excuse to spend money, you can stay home.”

“Sue, all I bought was two spare barrels for our machinegun. I did ask him about ammo but he said all he had was 2,000-rounds like he had the last time.”

“That weapon is crew served, right?”

“Yes. The Army uses a crew of 3, a gunner, an assistant gunner and an ammunition bearer to haul extra ammo. If there is a 4th member, he is the crew leader with the binoculars, compass and one box of ammo. Every member of the crew is trained to operate at all positions.”

“What did you carry for a weapon, a pistol?”

“Either a M1911 or a M16A1. They didn’t come out with the M9 until about 1985. I liked the M1911; I can’t see why they replaced it with a 9mm weapon. The 9mm pistol carries 15 rounds but you need more rounds because it doesn’t have much knockdown power, or so I’ve heard. On paper, it is supposed to be better, but I’m not convinced.”

“But the M1911 magazines only hold 7 rounds.”

“I know, but before they came out with the M1911, they had an experience in the Philippines. The weapon originated in response to problems encountered by American units fighting Moro insurgents during the Philippine-American War. The then-standard .38 caliber (actual bullet diameter: .357 inches or 9.07 mm) revolver was found to be unsuitable for the rigors of jungle warfare, particularly in terms of stopping power. (The Moro’s were found to be wearing improvised chest armor and frequently used native drugs to inhibit the sensation of pain.) The Army briefly reverted to the .45 Colt revolvers, which had been standard during the last decades of the 19th Century; the slower, heavier bullet was found to be more effective against charging tribesmen. An Ordnance Board, headed by John T. Thompson, concluded that a .45 caliber (11.4 mm) semi-automatic weapon would be most appropriate, and took bids from six firearms manufacturing companies in 1906.

“Of the six designs submitted, two were selected for field testing in 1907, one of them being Colt's model, which Browning had basically modified to government specifications from an earlier autoloading .380 caliber (also known as a 9mm short, .355 inch bullet diameter) design of his. Most pistols were eliminated early leaving the Savage, Colt, and DWM designs. Both Colt and Savage required refinements and the DWM Luger was soon withdrawn. The Luger in .45 caliber was considered suitable and competitive, however DWM believed their weapon wouldn't receive fair consideration in the trials and wasn't worth the financial investment required. A series of field tests was designed to decide between the Arthur Savage designed gun and the Colt. Attended by John Moses Browning, the Colt gun passed with flying colors, firing 6,000 rounds non-stop, a record at the time. The soundness of design is also borne out in its longevity of service (over 70 years).

“In order to meet the Ordnance Board's requirements, the 1911 was designed to fire a .45 caliber (11.4 mm), 230 grain (15 g) bullet at approximately 800 feet per second (240 m/s). These specifications were championed by Gen. Thompson, and were the result of terminal ballistics tests conducted in 1904 at the Nelson Morris Company stockyards in Chicago on live cattle and human cadavers. These tests lacked scientific rigor, but the stopping power of the .45 ACP cartridge was clearly demonstrated.”

“And they replaced it with the 9mm? That’s nothing more than a .38.”

“Tell me about it. No don't, that was just an expression. A 9mm is .354 caliber and a .38 is .357. By the way, the .50 BMG cartridge is 12.7x99mm compared to the 12.7x108mm cartridge the Russians use.”

“What are the standard NATO cartridges?”

“5.56x45mm, 7.62x51mm, 12.7x99mm and 9x19mm. It also includes the 25mm cannon shells and the 40mm grenades.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 14

“Where is our radio?”

“I have no idea, maybe the Captain turned him down. Or, maybe they don’t have enough to go around. Or, maybe he got busy and forgot. Or, maybe he was just shining us on. Or, maybe...”

“I get the idea, you don’t know and you don’t care.”

“I care a lot, but they have more .50 caliber machineguns than we do. Besides, we can always call Holloman AFB on the Guard channel and po that guy off again.”

“Is the President still at Holloman?”

“I really don’t know, but I’ll bet they put a lot of nukes on Washington, DC. He’s probably holed up there until the Secret Service says he can come out and play.”

“Are you keeping the barn clean?”

“Huh? Where is it written that it’s my job to shovel the manure?”

“Wives’ handbook, page 57; the husband is responsible for taking out the trash and anything you can’t eat is trash.”

“Yeah, right, you made that up. I’ll have you know that page 57 of the husbands’ handbook only say one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s time for a Bud.”

“You made that up.”

++++

“Are you ready for me to turn on the lights?”

“I thought you forgot.”

“I was busy inventorying the Bud.”

“How much do you have left?”

“Less than what I started with.”

“Let me get my coat. Come, Rex.”

“Aren’t you taking a gun?”

“Just to walk out in the yard?”

“How many times do we have to get attacked before you realize that there are unfriendly people out there? To top it off, you sold \$2,500 worth of quilts. There are people who would try and rob you for \$2,500.”

“You spent \$2,000 of the money I got.”

“Just so I could protect you my dear. Besides, maybe the bad guys didn’t see me spending your, our, money.”

“Oh, all right, I take the M-40.”

“Take a semi-auto Sue. Either the 11-87 or the M1A.”

Slam. Sue was out the door with empty hands, maybe I hadn’t suggested that right. Well, I’m here to tell you that if the bad guys show up, she’ll wish she took a gun. I worked my way to the OP, turning off the lights as I went. After I turned off the lights in the OP, I flipped the hand on that toggle box. I hadn’t realized how much those lights lit the place up. The last time the roles were switched and all I knew was that I couldn’t see the house.

◦

“Well?”

“Well what?”

“Bright enough out there for you?”

“I couldn’t even see the house.”

“Standing here looking out the window, I wish I hadn’t put in that bulletproof glass.”

“Why?”

“As well as the place is lit up, it would be a perfect place to snipe from.”

“You could cut a firing slot in the wall and cover it with a metal flap.”

“It might be a better idea to put up some metal plates so the bad guys couldn’t shoot at us through the wall.”

“What did you have in mind?”

“A couple of those metal plates they use to cover holes in the road when they don’t finish the job in one day.”

“ $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch is about 25mm?”

“No, about 19mm.”

“We’ll go to Alamogordo and see what we can find. Is that ok with you?”

It turned out that there was a subsidiary of Esco Corp named Heflin Steel in Phoenix. The company manufactured and supplied armor plate that was equal to NIJ level IV+ protection. They had a product called ARMOR GARD that had all kinds of applications even shooting ranges. We explained to the fella who sold us the bulletproof glass what we wanted. Anyway, he had some $\frac{1}{2}$ ” armor plate left over from another job he’d done and no one seemed to want to buy it. It turns out that Phoenix got hit, they didn’t have THAAD protection or it didn’t work. It was also a little more expensive than the glass at \$100 per ft².

“What do you think, Sue? I think we should just do the area around the bulletproof glass in the OP. Those sandbags ought to stop bullets for the first floor. We could put road plates behind the bags if you want.”

“What kind of setup do you have for your ground floor?”

“We have 2 layers of sandbags.”

“Is it sand or clay? Sand does a better job of stopping bullets than clay does.”

“It’s whatever the soil is around the house. What’s that, sand or adobe?”

“A little bit of both, I suppose. I think you could get by putting in a road plate behind 2 layers of sandbags, but you really ought to put armor plating around that window. Have you had any more trouble?”

“If you mean since they shot out our window and you put in the polycarbonate window, the answer is no. But that Sergeant said that people were talking about us have money. I picked up a Ma Deuce from that guy at the farmer’s market but only have 2,000-rounds of ammo. I was hoping that Sergeant Collins could supply us with a SINCGARS radio and more ammo.”

“It will run you about \$3,000 to protect that window.”

“How many pieces of gold?”

"2, the price is up to \$1,500 an ounce."

"Do you have enough plate to do the downstairs window too?" Sue asked.

"Just one window?"

"Yes."

"Let me check. Uh... Sorry, I don't. But I do have more of the bulletproof glass and it's only \$55 ft². For 4 gold Eagles, I'll include installation for the upstairs armor and the downstairs bulletproof glass."

"When can you do it?"

"Is an hour too soon?"

"COD ok with you?"

"As long as you show me the coins before I start working, yes."

"Come on out," Sue told him.

o

He brought help and by sundown, we were wrapped up tight in our armor blanket. Sue paid him with the 4 gold Eagles she'd taken from the cedar chest in the basement and laid on the table for him to see. It was up to me to replace the sandbags; I guess installation didn't include that. Sue said that we should plan on having quilts at the farmer's market everyday next week; we needed to replace the gold we'd used up on this and that. She also said that I could go with her if I behaved myself.

I assumed that meant stay out of her hair and not spend the money faster than she was raking it in. I suggested that I could go to the friendly neighborhood tavern and nurse a Bud. Her comeback was that she'd probably end up driving home every night. I promised to be good. Be our luck that the bad guys would show up, circle the house and throw Molotov cocktails or something. I guess that I shouldn't have dismantled that improvised shelter, huh?

Somehow I can just see myself come spring, 2 mares and 2 filly colts to care for plus all those chickens that Sue wants to get. That's a whole lot of manure for a city boy to haul. Seeing how we have a barn, she'll probably want to buy a feeder calf and a bunch of hogs, too. That's where I'm going to draw the line, have you ever smelled pig manure? Isn't it enough that I have to muck out the barn and haul it to the garden? No, come spring, I have to rototill it in. I'm getting mad just thinking about it, I think that it's Bud time. Well, I guess I'd better just have one, I only had 8 six-packs to begin with and it's

about ½ gone. I have to see if I can pick up another case of 8 six-packs at the tavern. It's almost Christmas and I'd say that 4 six-packs between the end of the world and Christmas isn't what you'd really call heavy drinking.

Author's Note:

Occasionally I put in a lyric to make a point or just share it. A few years ago, I lost my head and somehow managed to let myself get into something I hadn't planned on. She knew of my love for music and referred me to this song by Faith Hill:

*I've got this friend who is lonely
She's afraid she'll never find her one and only
A little shy but she can be fun
If the right guy came along
Would you know someone*

*I've got this friend and it sounds crazy
But he's been feeling that way too a whole lot lately
And interested, oh I'm sure he'd be
I can almost speak for him
He's that close to me*

*Maybe in each other
They might find the lover
They've been missin' until now
They'd trust the judgment of
Two friends like us who care so much
Can we get them together...somehow*

*I've got this friend
Yeah, I think I know her
My arms can almost feel the way he'd hold her
It's like he's here when you describe him
And if he's anything like you I'm sure she'd like him*

*Maybe in each other
They might find the lover
They've been missin' until now
They'd trust the judgment of
Two friends like us who care so much
Can we get them together...somehow*

Can we get together...I've got this friend

The Asian Question – Chapter 15

“I suppose that come spring you’re going to want to put in a feeder beef?”

“That would be nice.”

“I ain’t mucking out any pig manure.”

“But you really love those baby back ribs, Barry. And we could get 2 hams, 2 slabs of bacon and 2 smoked picnics from one hog. Couldn’t we just have 2 pigs?”

“If you can sell one quilt a day for 5 days in a row, I’ll consider it. Frankly, Sue, I don’t think that’s going to happen. That plus I can buy some more Bud from the tavern.”

“Are you out of beer?”

“Half out. But if I end up shoving hog manure, I’ll need more. So maybe I’d better plan on buying a couple of cases, that’s 8 six-packs per case.”

She let me buy the 2 cases of Bud, but I didn’t know that she had customers already lined up to buy 6 of her quilts. I should have said 2 a day for 5 days. It wouldn’t have mattered, you know, she sold 2 a day for 5 straight days. By the end of the week, she’d replaced most of the gold we’d used up. I wasn’t complaining because I had myself 20 six-packs of Bud. On Friday, we came home with a steer.

“At least you didn’t buy any pigs!”

“Sez who? I made a deal with a guy that raises hogs to take 2 off his hands just as soon as they’re weaned.”

“Are you planning on going back to the farmer’s market next week?”

“I have a couple of ladies who said if I was back they’d probably buy a quilt, why?”

“Because, if I’ve got to haul pig manure, I’m way short on Bud. As much manure as I already have on the garden, I think I’ll get out the rototiller and mix it in. I may have to start a compost pile and see if I can convert it to soil.”

“You don’t want to do that, composting manure causes it to lose nitrogen and carbon.”

“How do you know?”

“I can’t remember, but it’s true.”

When Sue says, “I can’t remember, but it’s true,” you can take it to the bank. I decided to just pile the manure instead of spreading it. If I had the time, I’ll still rototill in what I’d

spread and come spring, all I'd have to do to get the garden ready would be rake. It's a shame that it didn't work out that way.

++++

Because we'd done Christmas in September, present wise, it was just another day. We didn't have an election in November; apparently they couldn't put it together. Which raises an interesting question in my mind at least. Come January 20th when George Bush's term expires, who will be the new President? There really isn't a good answer according to my research. If the offices of President and Vice Present are vacant because of a non-election, that also means that the House of Representatives is vacant for the same reason and that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Senate is vacant. Do we follow the Presidential line of Succession or do the remaining $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Senate appoint a new President? A person would think that in a world with 20,000 nuclear weapons, the Congress would have passed a law to deal with the situation. Neither the Constitution nor the 25th Amendment really has an answer. Thank God the Secretary of Homeland Security is at the bottom of the list.

Back in 2003 the Continuity of Government Commission suggested that the current law has *at least seven significant issues... that warrant attention*, including:

- The reality that all figures in the current line of succession work and reside in the vicinity of Washington, DC. In the event of a terrorist or biological attack, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that everyone on the list would be killed or incapacitated.
- Doubt (such as those expressed above in Constitutional Questions Regarding Eligibility to Act) that Congressional leaders are, in fact, eligible to act as President.
- A specific question of the ability of a President pro tempore to act, as the "largely honorific post is traditionally held by the longest serving Senator of the majority party." For example, from January 20, 2001 to June 6, 2001, the President pro tempore was the 98 year-old Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina.
- A concern that Congressional leaders from the same political party as the President should be in the line of succession should the opposition party hold a majority in either house of Congress.
- A concern that the succession line is ordered by the dates of creation of the various executive departments, without regard to the skills or capacities of the persons serving as their Secretary.
- The fact that, should a cabinet member begin to act as President, the law allows the House to elect a new Speaker (or the Senate, a new President Pro Tempore), who could in effect remove the cabinet member and assume the office himself at any time.

- The absence of a provision where a President is disabled and the Vice Presidency is vacant (for example, if an assassination attempt simultaneously wounded the President, but killed the Vice President).

Who will be the President on January 20, 2009? It might be the fella with the biggest gun.

◦

For now, George was in charge and running the country out of Holloman AFB. I can't tell where they came from, but in the 4 months following the attack, Alamogordo inherited a lot of black Chevy Suburban's. Couldn't be the CIA, that can't operate on American soil so it must be the FBI, the Secret Service and Homeland Security.

The federal government built several bunkers back in the '50s, Greenbrier Government Relocation Facility, WV, Mount Pony Federal Reserve Center, VA, Raven Rock Mountain Complex, PA (Site R), the SAC bunker at Offutt Air Force Base where Bush held his first strategy session on 9/11/01 and Mount Weather Federal Bunker, VA. After the Washington Post did its expose on May 31, 1992 (Ted Gup), the government ended up decommissioning the Greenbrier and Mount Pony. They do bunker tours at the Greenbrier and Mount Pony was converted to a film library. The government never undoes anything; they simply replace it with something newer, thus the bunker at Holloman ABF that didn't exist. It's probably called Site H.

The people of the US didn't need to know about the secret bunkers regardless of what the media might claim. I guess that's why they didn't know about the new ones, huh? After the Cuban Missiles Crisis, John Kennedy pulled the Jupiter C missiles from Turkey, right? Not until Polaris carrying submarines relieved them. The US has 4 aircraft E-4B called NAOC (National Airborne Operations Center). One E-4B is kept on full alert at all times, and one remains relatively close to Air Force One so that the President can access it quickly from anywhere in the world. The NAOC fleet was originally deployed in 1974, when it was known as NEACP (National Emergency Airborne Command Post).

The Cold War never ended, it just changed character. The new players were Iraq, Iran, North Korea and China. North Korea and Iran had a deal, oil and gas for nuclear technology and missiles. For its part, Russia was getting the money for new weapons systems by selling off all of the older systems to anyone who could pay the price. One of its better customers had been the PRC. The Russians must have had a lot of the T-72 tanks because everyone had some now. They also had millions of the AK-47s and its derivatives that they sold off when they went to the AK-74. Although the Russians still use the AK-74, some of their luckier troops get the much-improved AN-94. Excuse me, I have to stop making notes in my journal and go shovel manure.

◦

"Did you finish your chores?"

“Yes, dear. I stoked the furnace twice, cleaned up, ate breakfast, feed the horses and the steer and shoveled the manure and piled it.”

“On Monday you can come to town with me and get your Bud. The rest of the week, you’d better stay home and do your chores. I don’t want you sitting in a tavern all day for another week.”

“But, Sue...”

“You said that you wanted to rototill the manure into the garden didn’t you?”

“Yeah, but...”

“And the more I look at the house with all those sandbags stacked on the porch, the less I like it. You get some of your paint and paint that armor on the second floor to match the paint on the house. I don’t care what you do with the sandbags, but get them off the porch.”

“Yeah, but...”

“I’ll see if I can track down that nice Sergeant Collins and see if he has our SINCGARS radio yet.”

“Yes, dear.” (Bud time).

I guess that I shouldn’t complain, that woman could outshoot me something fierce. That’s half the reason I gave her the M-40. The other reason was that given the choice between a bolt-action rifle with only 5 shots and a HK91 or M1A, Remington lost. Like I said, you can’t shoot more than one gun at a time, but it is very nice to have spares to switch to if you get a jam or something.

“Sue when I’m in town on Monday, would it be ok with you if I looked around and found a pair of night vision binoculars?”

“Don’t you have enough toys?”

“But night vision would be great. I could even look for a night vision scope for your M-40. Wouldn’t it be better if we could see in the dark and decide how many bad guys there were before we lit up the place?”

“What kind of scope?”

“How about an AN/PVS-10, night vision sniper scope? They’re built for the M-24 SWS but they ought to fit on your M-40. Second generation night vision, Sue.”

“See if you can find me a 3rd Generation night scope. I heard of one called the Raptor that comes in 4X and 6X.”

I'd heard of the Raptor, they were military and LEO only and cost about \$7,000. The tube was made by ITT and its light magnification was on the order of 50,000X. I wonder if that woman wants caviar on her toast for breakfast. Oh, well, if she sells enough quilts, I guess it doesn't matter. We can leave Rex home on Monday to guard the place, he's really getting big and I wouldn't want to have him mad at me. Do you suppose that Sgt. Collins isn't giving us a SINCGARS because we don't have ham licenses? Or, is it because they talk about all kinds of secret stuff on the military radios that we civilians don't have a right/need to know?

Need to know is one of those spy thingies that the government uses to keep secrets. It was like the Greenbrier Resort. For 30 years they had the bunker there and denied its existence because we didn't need to know. You can darn well bet the Russians knew about it. They have a bunch of shelters too. I really doubt if you fly over Area 51, they'll have the reassembled flying saucers sitting around for you to gawk at. Sometimes, I think that the military is its own worst enemy. That goes for the government in general, too. Sometimes those people act like we're on different sides. They worked on the Nighthawk at Area 51 to test it. Did you know how Area 51 got set up in the first place?

Kelly Johnson with Lockheed needed a place to test his super-secret spy plane, the U-2. Groom Lake was used for bombing and artillery practice during World War II, but was then abandoned until 1955, when it was selected by Lockheed's skunkworks team as the ideal location to test the forthcoming U-2 spy plane. The first Have Blue prototype stealth fighter (a smaller cousin of the F-117 Nighthawk) first flew at Groom in late 1977. Testing of a series of ultra-secret prototypes continued there until mid-1981, when testing transitioned to the initial production of F-117 stealth fighters. They also flew the super-secret Aurora aircraft into Groom Lake. The project was a failure and the government never admitted that the airframe existed. You've probably never heard of the man who cancelled the Aurora program, Dick Cheney. (That's the Urban Myth on Aurora. The real story was that Aurora was a cover name for the B-2 bomber.)

The Air Force waived a red flag when the Aurora program got cancelled; they pulled 3 SR-71s out of retirement for a while. Eventually, the duties of the SR-71s were taken over by satellites. That aircraft cost about \$350,000 per flight just to operate. Do I know that for a fact? No, but I knew the project manager at the skunk works who wasn't even allowed to use the word Aurora. The USGS at Pasadena stopped reporting the tracks across southern California that was made by the returning non-existent Aurora aircraft shortly thereafter. For every super slick airframe the US has, it has had its share of failures. We all marvel at the B-2 bomber. The Northrop YB-49, which preceded it, was the jet-propelled variant of the company's XB-35 bomber. Perhaps it is fair to say that Northrop's design concepts were solid, but the means to implement them were still several decades away. The YB-49 was simply a generation ahead of its time. The YB-49 was the “wrong plane at the wrong time,” getting trapped in the transition between propeller-driven and jet-powered aircraft.

The Asian Question – Chapter 16

I sure hope that Bud doesn't get old in the can like Coors does. I scored big on Monday, getting 4 cases of 8 six-packs each. I got lucky and found Sue her darned Raptor 6X 3rd Generation night vision scope. You'd be positively amazed at how small of a package you can get a \$7,000+ scope in. I say 7+ because it cost more like 8. We could just add it to all of the other equipment we had that we weren't supposed to have like the 2 suppressors and the Ma Deuce.

I spend 2 days moving those sandbags. The problem I had was where to put them. I ended up building a couple of foxholes; they call them fighting positions these days, between the house and the road. Then I found the 2½-gallons of leftover house paint and stirred it for a couple of hours until I got it blended back together. I could have used an electric drill and a piece of coat hanger but I'd burned the motor out on my drill. I could see right away that that armor plate was going to take 2 coats of paint, maybe 3 to sort of blend in with the house.

On Thursday after I'd put on the 2nd coat, Sue came home with a present. Apparently she'd cornered Sgt. Collins and had a SINCGARS radio. She also had 2,000 additional rounds of .50BMG AP/APIT ammo.

"When are you going to mount my Raptor on my M-40?"

"It looks like the weekend, I still have to put another coat of paint on that armor."

"If that's the case, I'll do it myself."

"Sell many quilts?"

"I've just about sold out. Christmas is next week and people must be buying presents. Bottom line is we're actually ahead on money. I ran into that nice Sgt. Collins and persuaded him to part with a radio for you and that ammo."

"I'll get up that Army field manual and print it out so I know how to use it. Do you know if he put in the keys?"

"Huh?"

++++

"In the FH Mode. SINCGARS radios can store FH data for unique FH nets. SINCGARS radios require four data elements to communicate in the FH mode. The data elements are: hopsets/lockouts; net identification (ID); net sync time; and transmission security key (TSK). Once FH data is loaded, the user moves from one FH net to the other by selecting another FH net using the channel selector switch (non-ASIP ICOM only). In addition, users in nets sharing a common hopset, TSK, and sync time can also move from

net to net by entering the appropriate net ID. The ASIP ICOM radio does not have a channel select switch. With the ASIP ICOM radio, switching hopsets is accomplished by switching to the NCS mode. Move the position select knob to "load", press "freq", press "menu clear", enter the last two numbers of the hopset, press "STO" and select the channel where the hopset is to be stored.

(1) Hopsets/lockouts. The hopset is the set of frequencies (2320 frequencies minus protected frequencies) on which an FH net hops. Hopsets are electronically loaded and stored in the radio. SINCGARS radios have the capability of storing a unique hopset in each preset FH channel. Lockouts provide frequency exclusions in conjunction with a hopset.

(2) Net IDs. The net ID is a three-digit number from 000 to 999 that distinguishes one FH net from another when all other FH data elements are the same. Unique net IDs may be stored in each FH preset channel. Net IDs, embedded in the hopset data, are loaded electronically with a fill device or by electronic remote fill (ERF) and may be changed using the keypad or control panel of the SINCGARS RT.

(3) Sync time. Sync time is required for synchronization of the frequency hops. Sync time consists of the last two digits of the Julian date (SINCGARS Julian Date) plus a six-digit time (hours:minutes:seconds). Each station in the FH radio net must be within plus or minus four seconds of the net sync time to communicate.

(4) TSK. The TSK is a generated variable that controls the pseudo-random FH pattern. A TSK must be loaded into the SINCGARS radio prior to opening an FH net. TSKs are electronically loaded into the radio with a fill device. After net opening, the TSK may be transferred by ERF.

(5) FH-Master (FH-M) mode. Only one radio in each FH radio net will use this mode. The FH-M radio maintains the radio net's sync time and performs the ERF. Normally the designated NCS or alternate NCS will operate in the FH-M mode.

(6) CT communications. CT operations require a traffic encryption key (TEK). A key encryption key (KEK) is required for over-the-air rekey (OTAR). TEK and KEK are electronically loaded and stored in the radio or external security equipment.

(7) The TEK is used in CT operation and encrypts/decrypts operational voice and digital data transmissions

(8) The KEK encrypts/decrypts TEKs and is used for OTAR of TEKs."

"If you say so. I don't know a thing about all of that, he just gave me the radio and an antenna and said that it operated on standard military voltage."

"28 volts, I'll have to go to town with you tomorrow and get a power supply."

o

“Well, Sgt. Collins has a table set up at the farmer’s market. They seem to be trying to recruit a few good men and women.”

“I guess that lets us out.”

“That’s an awful thing to say.”

“It may be, but it’s true. Let’s face it, Sue, we’re not kids anymore. After I did my hitch in the Army, I never figured on needing to carry a gun again. Of course the problem is, the place you need to carry a gun is California and you can’t do it there. Here where we don’t need to carry a gun in normal times, it’s not that difficult to get a CCW.”

“You’re preaching to the choir.”

“Sorry. Like I said, I’ll go to town with you tomorrow and talk to Sgt. Collins about the things I need to know to make the radio work. I think I’ll just use the HF antenna for the CB radio and turn it to 11 meters. I can replace the CB antenna with the SINCGARS antenna and use the same coax.”

“Did he say why he didn’t give us the radio sooner?”

“Apparently he forgot. Then when he saw us in town on Monday, he went looking and got one of the spares they keep to swap-out in the HMMWVs. He told me that he’d heard that you’d bought a Ma Deuce and just figured you’d need more ammo, especially since you bought more barrels.”

“Sgt. Collins seems to know a lot for someone we haven’t seen in quite a while.”

“They still do those patrols so they’re keeping an eye on us. Now that we can handle anything that comes along, maybe we won’t have to.”

“Wish in one hand...”

“I’m just happy you didn’t want a Generation 4 Night vision scope.”

“Why?”

“\$16 thousand, that’s why.”

“Is it going to be a problem switching between the day vision and night vision scopes?”

“That depends on how far you’re shooting, Sue. You will be ok out to about 500 yards. At least that’s what I’ve read.”

“I was just thinking that since it’s dark anyway it might be a good time for me to sight in the Raptor.”

“Use the suppressor so you don’t get flash blindness. Do you want me to try and spot for you? It will give me a chance to check out my new night vision binoculars.”

“Where can we shoot?”

“I think the best bet would be to the south, Sue. It is 3 miles to the nearest house. We can start at 25 yards so you can dial the Raptor in and then work your way out. What’s the maximum distance you’ve shot with the day vision scope?”

“500 yards. If I can get the scope zeroed at 300 yards, I think that will be enough. That’s more than the distance from the house to the road.”

o

Long story short, the M-40 with the Raptor was good to go out to 400-yards. I figured to use either my M1A or the HK91 if we had another night attack and just spray and pray. Of course with the lights on, that wouldn’t be necessary. Those armor plates had holes cut in them so a person could fire through them. I cut out a firing slot on either side of the OP window and rigged it up so I could open and close the hole. Nothing fancy, just cutout remounted with a piano hinge. But I had to do something, when the hole was open; the wind really blew through that hole. Our house faced north and when the wind was up and out of the north, the OP cooled off very fast.

I totally slapped on the paint during the 2nd coat hoping to avoid a 3rd. I wasn’t sure if there was enough paint in the can to paint that armor a 3rd coat. Probably my fault, I patched the bullet holes and painted over them too. That old saying that the 3rd time is a charm had better be wrong. If we get attacked 3rd time, I want the luck on our side again. That’s all it is, you know – luck. Where the 3 bad guys shot around the upstairs window, the bullets penetrated several layers of wall. I had to spackle all of the holes and dab a little paint to hide them.

Darn those Chinamen. I was perfectly happy living here without livestock. But no, they had to go and attack the US simply because George W. Bush wouldn’t give them Taiwan. Personally I can’t see the sense of getting our country destroyed to keep one bunch of Chinese from merging with another bunch of Chinese. The British didn’t put near a stink when the Chinese claimed Hong Kong. They handed it over on 7/1/97. The PRC guaranteed that Honk Kong would remain a separate legal entity until 2047. All the Chinese had to do was make the same deal with Dubya and the Taiwanese.

Our background radiation level was still higher than I liked, but it was probably due to trans-Pacific radiation. It was low enough that no one was going to get radiation sickness but lower would have been better. After the paint dried I decided that it didn’t need

a 3rd coat right now so I was free to go to Alamogordo with Sue on Friday. Sgt. Collins had his table set up and I went over and sat down.

“I hear you’re looking for a few good men and women.”

“Yeah, but you’re too old. Sorry.”

“That isn’t why I wanted to talk to you Sergeant. I read FM 06-02-72 and I understand that I need 4 pieces of information to get that SINCGARS radio to work.”

“I forgot to give your wife the CD I copied. You do understand that you’re only to use that radio in the case of another attack don’t you?”

“Of course. We did some home improvements and I have firing ports and bulletproof glass in the OP. We also bulletproofed the area around the living room window where we have that .50 caliber set up.”

“What happened to the sandbags?”

“How do you know that? I just moved them this week.”

“You know we patrol the area, it was mentioned is all.”

“Well, I set up 2 firing positions between the house and the road. It was the only place I could figure to put the sandbags.”

“The radio is an ICOM with the advanced system improvement program model RT-1523B. It has built in GPS. The software is on this CD.”

“Thanks a lot for the ammo. Now I have 4 barrels and 4,000-rounds.”

“I know. I went to my Company Commander to get the SINCGARS radio when you asked. He thought it might be a good idea to have a few sprinkled around the area. Your home is on US 54 and I would like for you to sit in your OP and keep an eye on the highway. Either you or Mrs. Ryan, it doesn’t matter which of you watches. We’ll want the radio back when everything is back to normal.”

“When will that be?”

“Summer at the earliest and quite possible next fall. At the moment, the powers that be are trying to restore order so they can have an election as soon as possible. You understand, don’t you, that the laws of this country never addressed a situation like the one we find ourselves in? What they decided to do was leave the sitting President in place, subject to the pleasure of Congress and try and hold the election by Independence Day. As soon as the vote count is verified, the new President takes office.”

“I was wondering about that myself. I have some documents on my computer like the Constitution and the Amendments. Is that legal do you suppose?”

“That question is above my pay grade, Mr. Ryan.”

“Obviously the President suspended Posse Comitatus if the military is acting in a law enforcement capacity.”